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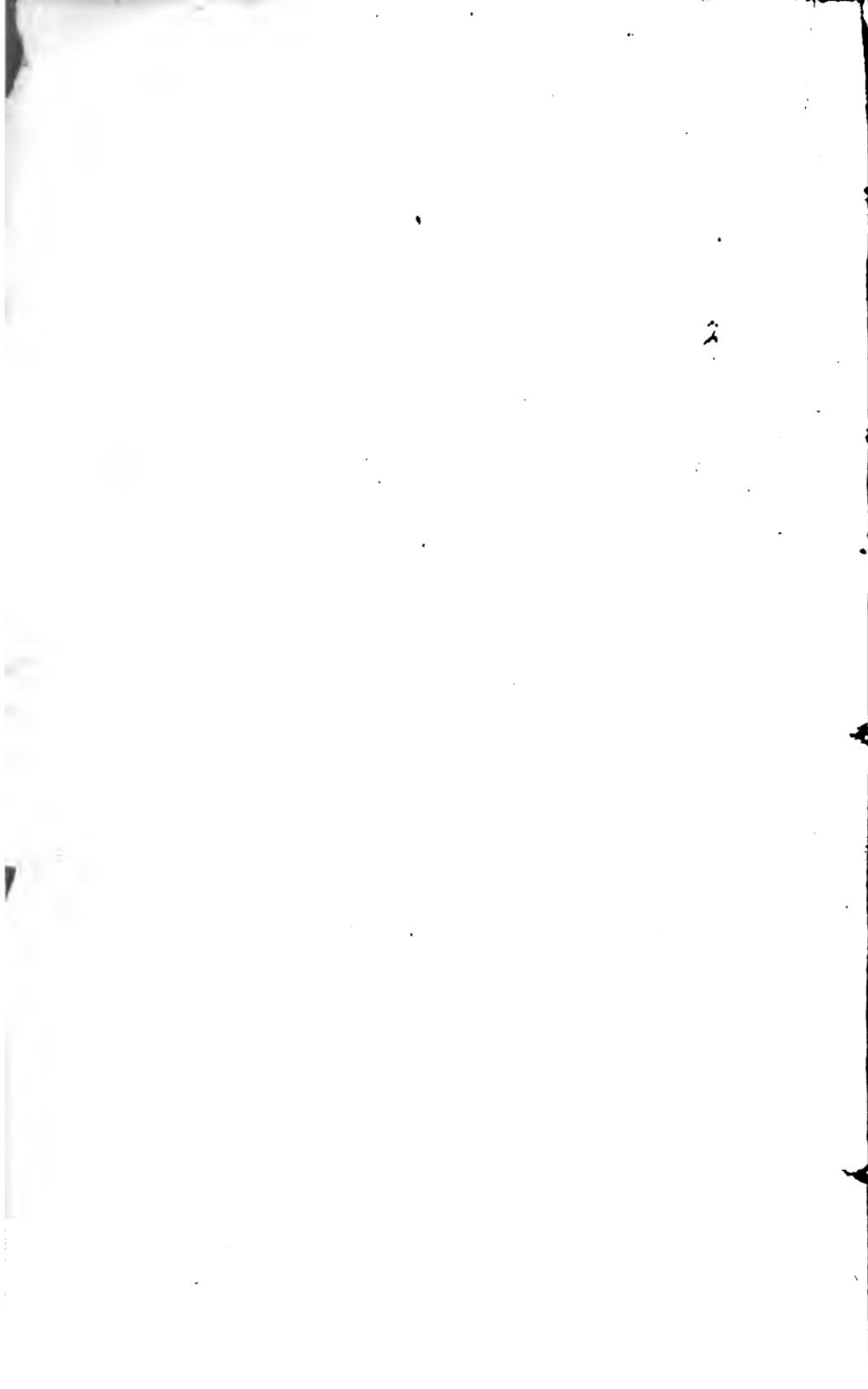
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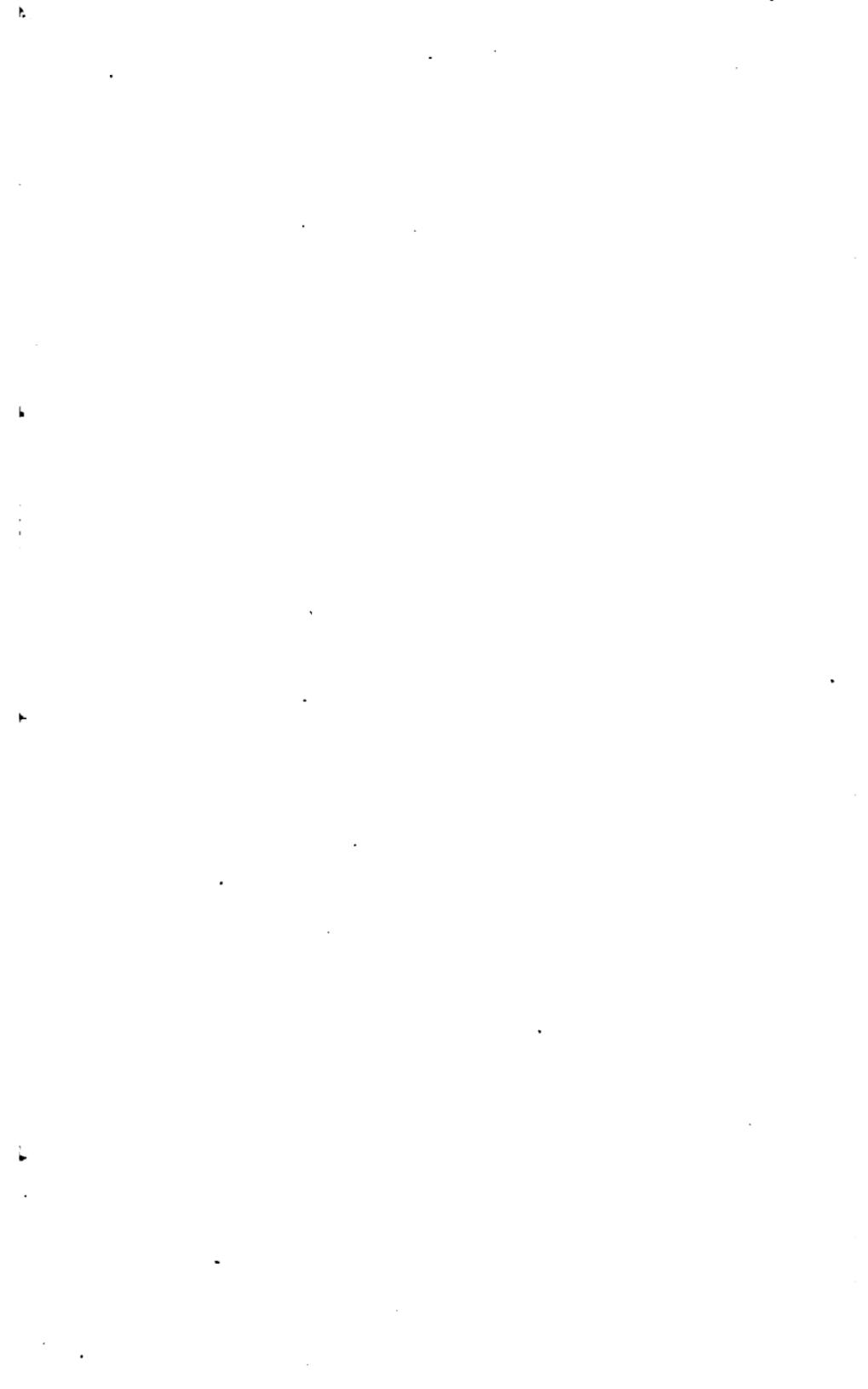


for out of olde fables ab men seith
Cometh al this newe comys to peer to yere
And out of olde booke in good feith
Cometh al this newe science that men leare

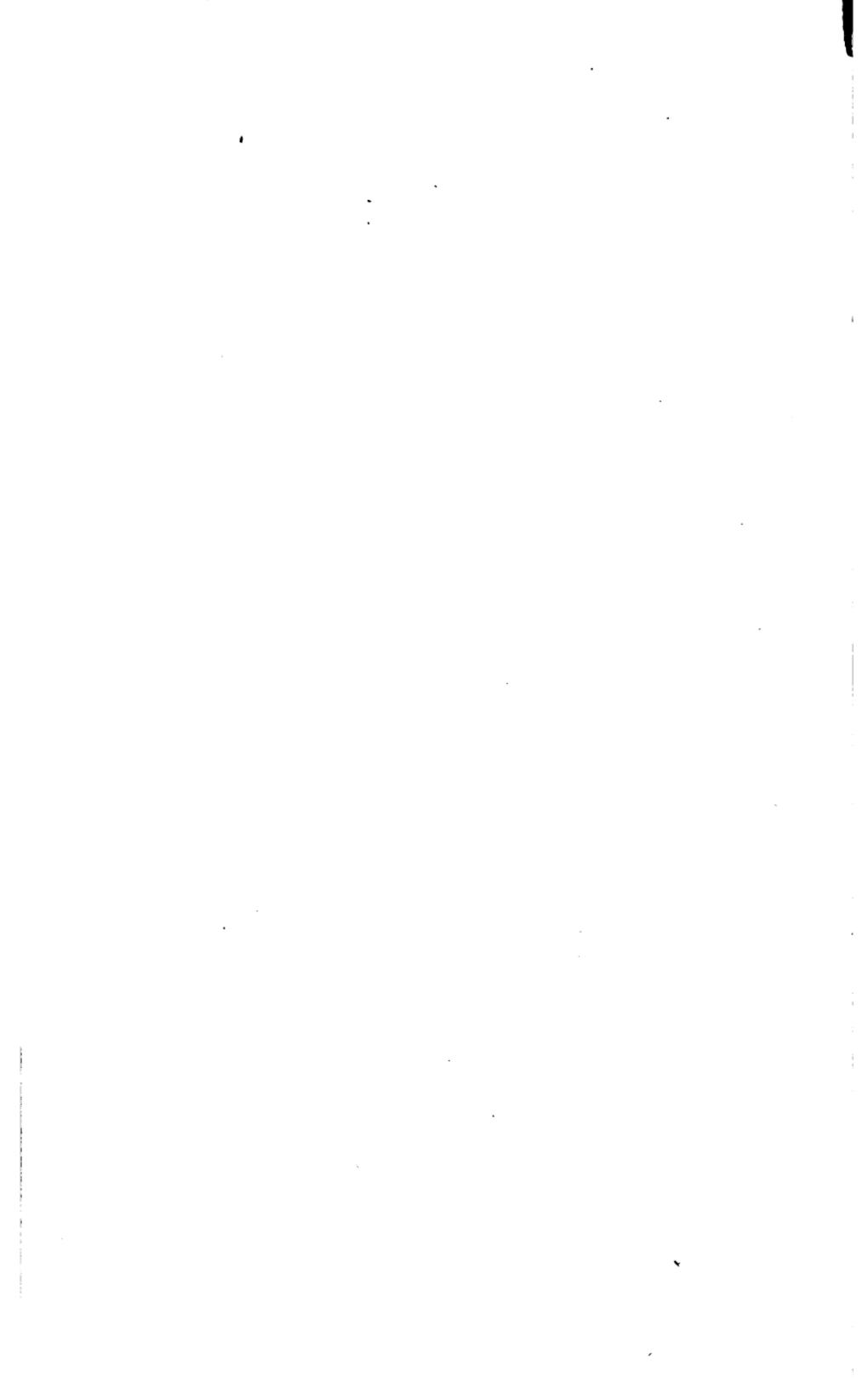
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History

of the

English Language and Literature

from the Earliest Times until the Present Day

including

The American Literature,

with a Bibliographical Appendix,

by

F. J. Bierbaum, Ph. D.

Professor at the Ladies' High-School in Karlsruhe.

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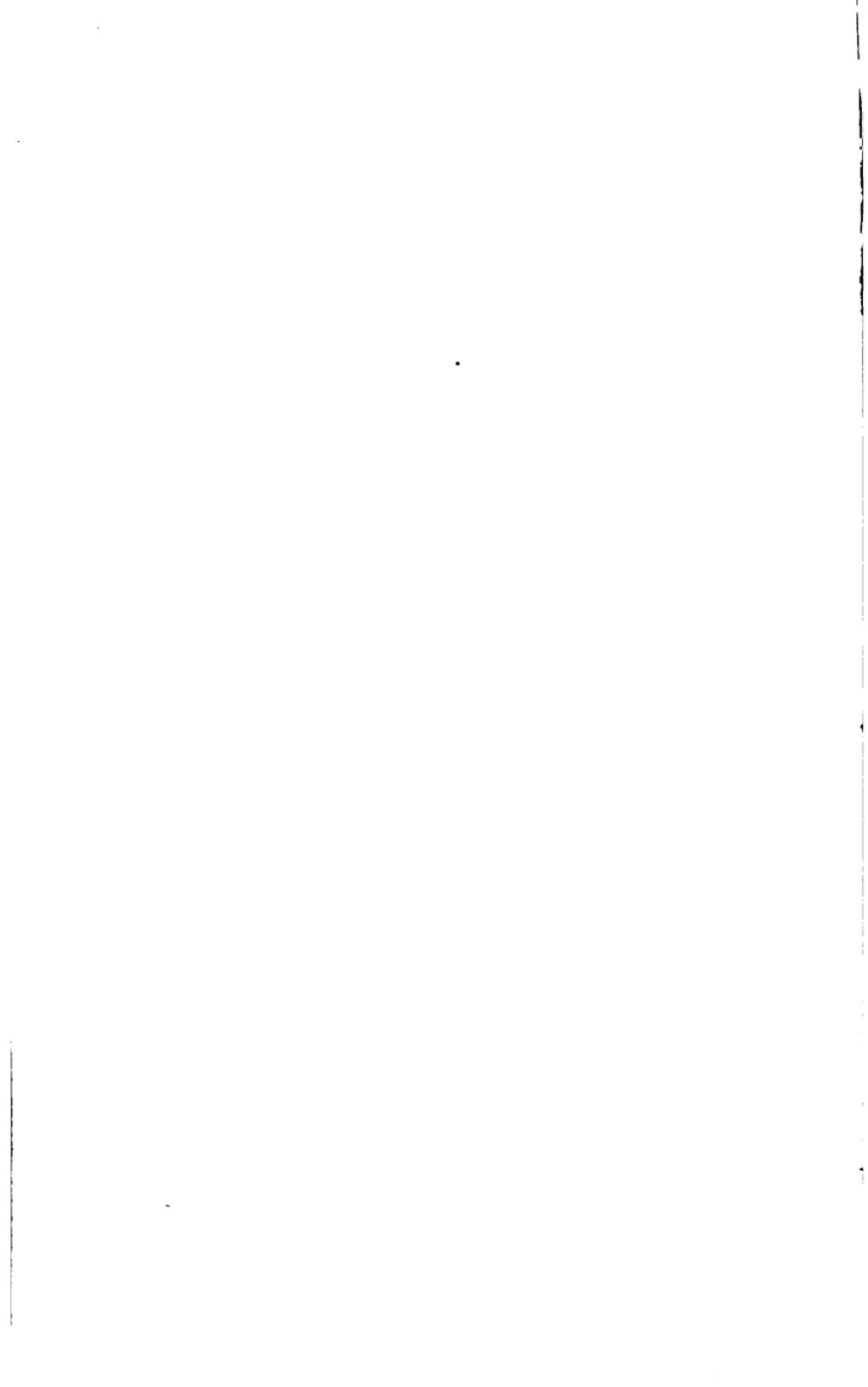
Dedicated to

Professor Dr. Richard P. Wülker

as a slight token

of esteem and gratitude.

395608



Preface to the second Edition.

This little work, which has met with a most favourable reception since its first appearance, is again presented, in a somewhat altered shape, to the students of English Literature, for whom it is intended to become a guide and instructor during their first steps into this vast and fertile domain. In order to make it a truly practical manual, the author has not limited himself to consult his own experience and the best English and German literary sources, but has availed himself of the kind assistance of a number of learned German, English, and American men of authority, whose inestimable contributions deserve his heartiest thanks, and will, no doubt, secure to the work the attention and estimation of students of English Literature. He is greatly indebted to Professor Dr. R. Wüller of the University of Leipzig and to Professor J. H. Chamberlin of Marietta College, Ohio, America, for their kind corrections and most valuable contributions, the former to various parts of the English Literature, the latter to the Literature of America; to the Rev. the Warden Robert Rice, M. A., of St. Columba's College, Dublin, to Mr. Charles Brown, Heidelberg, and to Dr. L. Proescholdt, Oberlehrer at Homburg v. d. H., for their kind and indefatigable corrections of the proof-sheets and their numerous and important suggestions and additions to the work. Besides, the many critics of the first edition have conscientiously been taken into consideration, although some of their demands could not be complied with from being either unfounded or exaggerated.

As to the "Bibliographical Appendix", it will probably offer a propitious ground for criticism, as the views on the extent of the requirements for beginners may be widely differing. It does not pretend either to completeness or perfection; its only object is to facilitate information and to save that great loss of time and trouble always attending the first steps into unknown regions. Corrections and kind suggestions will ever be thankfully accepted.

Karlsruhe, July 1888.

The Author.

N.B.! The outer numbers of the pages refer to the 'Student's Edition', the inner numbers to the 'School-Edition'.

The * refers to the Bibliographical Appendix.

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§ 1. **INTRODUCTORY SURVEY.**

The language and literature of England, being closely connected with the political history of the nation, will be best traced and studied in connexion with the latter; for which end the political events will furnish, as far as possible, the leading features of the present outline. According to this principle, the history of the English language and literature may be divided into the following periods and ages:

1. The Anglo-Saxon Period, from c. 600—1100.

2. The Old English Period, from 1100—1580.

Four subdivisions may be distinguished in it:

- a.* The Age of Transition (Semi-Saxon): 1100—1250;
- b.* The Early English Period: 1250—1360;
- c.* The Age of Chaucer (Middle English): 1360—1450;
- d.* The Protestant Reformation or Revival of Learning: 1450—1580.

3. The Modern English Period, from 1580 till the present time, including also the literature of America. Here again, six distinct eras may be marked in the general aspect of literature:

- a.* The Elizabethan Era, 1580—1625, till the death of James I.;
- b.* The Civil-War Period, 1625—1688; from the accession of Charles I. till the second Revolution;
- c.* The Classic Age of Queen Anne, 1688—1745; from the accession of William of Orange till the death of Pope (1744) and Swift (1745);
- d.* The Return to Nature, 1745—1800;
- e.* The Nineteenth Century, from 1800 till the present day, comprising:
 - aa.* The Revival of Romantic Poetry, 1800—1830, till about the death of Byron (1824) and Scott (1832);
 - bb.* The Victorian Age.
- f.* The American Literature.

YD MUD ADMIRALIAO

CHAPTER I.

§ 2.

HISTORICAL SURVEY UP TO THE YEAR 1066.*

The earliest known inhabitants of Britain or Albion¹ belonged to the Celtic race, spread over the western parts of Europe. They were a predatory nation, and divided into two great branches, the Gael and the Cymry, the former inhabiting the Highlands of Scotland and Ireland, the latter the principality of Wales. Their religion was a kind of paganism, called Druidism, embodying a considerable part of their government institutions; their chief sanctuary was the Isle of Mona, now Anglesea. Traces of their customs and worship still linger in England² and relics of their race are found in Wales, the Highlands of Scotland, the western and southern parts of Ireland and the Isle of Man, where Celtic dialects continue to be spoken to the present day. Their intercourse with the Phoenicians remains doubtful.

These ancient inhabitants came for the first time into contact with a civilized nation in the year 55 B. C., when Julius Caesar invaded their country with two of his legions. From the time of a second great incursion of Britain by the Romans under Claudius in 43 A. D., many bloody battles were fought, until at last the Celts, though obstinate and ferocious, were overcome by the superior skill and military discipline of the Romans, and their country made a Roman province by Agricola (78—85 A. D.). The conquerors erected several walls to prevent the ravages of the savage northern tribes, divided the land into six provinces, and endeavoured to introduce their customs,

¹ Albion, a Celtic word, meaning "White Island", connected with "albus" and "Alp".

² The "May-day"; the fires of "Midsummer-eve"; "Harvest-home"; the cutting of the "Mistletoe" at Christmas, which, however, are by some ascribed to Germanic origin.

laws, and civilisation. Frequent inroads, however, from these northern inhabitants, and troubles from the Barbarians¹ at home, caused the Emperor Honorius to withdraw his legions; and with them all signs of Roman authority ceased in the year 409 A. D. after a dominion of about 400 years.

After the departure of the Romans, the Picts and Scots, the inhabitants of the mountainous regions, descended to harass the romanized parts of the population, and to destroy the works of civilisation. The appeal of the latter to Rome not being answered, they called to their assistance the warlike race of the Saxon pirates or "sea kings", who came from their homes in Jutland, Sleswic and Holstein, and from the shores of the Baltic to subdue the invaders. As a reward they are said to have received the province of Kent. During a century or more, fresh hordes of Saxons continued to pour in, gradually conquering the lowland territory and driving the inhabitants back into their mountain districts; part of them, the Bretons, took possession of that western portion of France, which was then called Armorica, but now, after them, Brittany (Bretagne). These Germanic tribes called themselves Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. The Angles seem to have been the most powerful, for they afterwards gave their name to the whole country, although the name of the "Sekkas" is still mentioned for a long time. According to legendary traditions, the most celebrated opponent of these new invaders was Arthur, king of South-Wales. With his officers, the sixty "Knights of the Round Table", he won twelve battles, until he was slain by his treacherous nephew Mordred in 542. In the course of time, the Saxons founded seven kingdoms, called the "Saxon Heptarchy:" Kent, South-Saxons (Sussex), West-Saxons (Wessex), East-Saxons (Essex), Northumbria, East-Anglia, and Mercia which comprised the Midland counties. One of these seven kings, the wisest and mightiest, called "Bretwalda" (powerful king), had always the ascendancy over the rest.

In 596, St. Augustine, sent by Pope Gregory the Great, introduced Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons; the Celts had turned Christians before. The first royal convert was Aethelberth, who built a church at Canterbury which became the metropolis of Christianity in England, although the kingdom of Northumbria was its most powerful seat, as it was likewise that of culture

¹ Alaric, king of the Visigoths, conquers Rome 410.

and learning. Under the influence of Christianity, the English or *Englis*, as they called themselves now, made great progress in the arts of civilisation.

Egbert, king of the West-Saxons, finally united the seven kingdoms into one in the year 827. From this time till the middle of the eleventh century, English history is full of fierce strife and bloodshed. Scandinavian freebooters, especially the Danes, made frequent inroads into England, trying to subdue the country, and at last succeeded in founding a Danish dynasty on the eastern coast. This district, reaching from the Thames to the Tweed, was named the "Danelagh" ¹.

The brightest figure of these times is Aelfred the Great (871—901), the youngest son of Egbert. He fought several battles against the Danes, in which, though defeated at first, he finally was successful in checking their progress and forcing them to acknowledge his authority. Aelfred greatly improved the material and intellectual condition of his people: he translated Latin works for the use of the lower classes, gave a code of laws, built strong castles and towns, made a division of the lands, and improved and enlarged the fleet. His son and successor, Edward the First, assumed the title of "King of the Anglo-Saxons" ("Anglosaxorum rex" or as "totius gentis Angulsaxorum gubernator"), and is the reputed founder of the University of Cambridge.

Under the following kings, the Danes occasionally renewed their ravages, and in the year 1016, Canute established the Danish rule in England, which, however, lasted only 26 years (1042). With Edward the Confessor, the Saxon line was restored and continued for a short time under his successor Harold II., until in the year 1066, England was conquered by William, Duke of Normandy.

§ 3.

CELTIC, SCANDINAVIAN, LATIN, AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.*

The language of the ancient Britons was divided into two branches, the Gaelic, or the *Erse*, representing the oldest state of the language, dialects of which are still spoken in Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man (the *Mansc*), and the Cymric

¹ *Daneleah*, from *leah* (to lay), a camp.

or Welsh, which was spoken at the time of the Roman invasions and is still surviving in Wales, Cornwales, and Brittany. Very scanty traces, however, are left in the literary language. These relics, consisting only of scattered words, are chiefly names of implements, or terms relating to agriculture and domestic occupations¹, with a considerable number of familiar expressions², and a few proper names.³ In this language were written the oldest specimens of the literature of modern Europe. Scraps of Irish verses, ascribed to the fifth century, legendary ballads⁴, bardic songs⁵, glosses, and prose accounts of Irish history⁶ are still extant.

The language of the Scandinavians or the Danes (as they were called by the Saxons) has furnished a great number of names of families and places in the North and East of England. The termination 'by', originally signifying a farm, then a village or town⁷, is still met with in Whitby, Derby [Deorby, deer], Grimsby [town of Grim], Rugby, Dalby [dale] etc.; likewise are all the family names, formed with 'son', as Johnson, Adamson, Nelson etc. of northern origin. The verb 'earan' (are) was adopted for 'sindon' or 'sind', and the use of the preposition 'of', as a sign of the genitive case, was introduced from the same source in the twelfth century.⁸

¹ Bard, basket, bog, bran, cart, clan, claymore (sword), coat, cockle, cradle, crag, den, fillibeg and kilt (short petticoat of the highlanders), flannel, garter, glen, gyve, hem, hog, pail, pibroch (battle-song), pitcher, plaid, reel, shamrock (trefoil), task, whiskey (uisg-water), willow etc.

² Balderdash (idle talk), bug, bugbear (hobgoblin), lad, lass, hog, sham (deceit), spree (trick, glee), to bully, to cower, to grumble, to kick, to knock, to lick (to cudgel), to toss, to trip etc.

³ Avon, (water), Aberdeen, Dee, Derwent, Dover, Exe, Kent, London (?), Man, (isle), Trent, Tweed.

⁴ The Comment of Gospel of St. Mark, oldest literary monument, in Turin. — The Psalter of Cashel, one of the oldest remaining MSS. of Irish literature, compiled towards the end of the 9th century, contains metrical legends.

⁵ The Songs of the enchanter Merlin (Merdhin) a sage and poet of the sixth century, chanting the calamities of the Cymrians, and those of the bard Taliessin still remain.

⁶ The Annals of Tigernach and of the Four Masters of Ulster.

⁷ Bye-law, the law of a borough.

⁸ Of Scandinavian origin are: Ale, anger, bag, to bask, blunt, bull, brink, booty, cake, call, curl, cast, to cow, crop, to dwell, earl, eke, to egg (to edge or incite), flay, fell, fellow, flat, to flit, to foster, gain, gust, gin, hair, hap, heel, to hit, husband, ill, to irk, kid, kindle, knife, law, leg, meek, odds, to ransack, row, score, scrap, to scrape, shallow, skill, skin, sky, to slit, slouch, sly, sneak, spoil, swain, to take, thrall, thrift, tiding, ugly, want, window, wile, wont, wrath. —

It is from the Latin, the English language has received not only the greatest contributions to its vocabulary, but also the most important influence as regards its structure, either directly, through the Roman conquerors, the Church, and the revival and cultivation of classic studies, or indirectly, through the medium of the French language. About four fifths of all borrowed words are of Latin origin.

From the time of the Roman conquest, though it lasted about four centuries, only very few words have survived, as: *castra* (a camp) in Chester, Colchester, Manchester, Gloucester, Leicester, Doncaster; *colonia* (a colony) in Lincoln; *pons* (a bridge) in Pontefract (pron. *Pomfret*); *porta* (a door) in Newport; *portus* (a harbour) in Bridgeport, Portsmouth, and *strata* in street, *vallum* in wall.

Since the introduction of Christianity in the beginning of the seventh century, the Church, which was keeping on a constant intercourse with Rome and almost exclusively cultivated learning and letters, introduced a great number of Latin and latinized Greek words connected with ecclesiastical or religious matters. Such words are: Bishop (*episcopus*), chalice (*calix*), candle (*candela*), church (*cyrice, κυριακὴ*), clerk (*clericus*), cloister (*claustrum*), devil (*diabolus*), epistle (*epistola*), minster (*monasterium*), porch (*porticus*), priest (*presbyter*), psalter (*psalterium*), mass (*missa*), provost (*praepositus*), to preach (*praedicare*), saint (*santus*) etc.

The widest channel, however, through which Latin elements were streaming in by thousands after having already undergone a great change in shape, accent and pronunciation, was the Norman-French language.

This infusion had already begun before the time of the Norman conquest under the last Saxon kings; Edward the Confessor, having been educated at the Norman court, spoke the French tongue with predilection and introduced many French ecclesiastics into England. The conquest of England finally succeeded in firmly rooting this language in the kingdom.

The way in which the fusion of so many foreign words with the English tongue gradually took place, was threefold: firstly by shifting the accent from the termination to the root, according to the English accentuation, which, as in all Germanic languages, is logical, whilst in those of Latin derivation it is rhythmical, thus: *accént* into *áccent*, *honnéur* into *hónour*,

questión into *quéstion¹* etc.; secondly by adopting the English inflexions, as in the conjugation of verbs: *mov-e*, *mov-est*, *mov-es²* etc. and in the comparison of adjectives: *safe*, *saf-er*, *saf-est³* etc.; and thirdly by adapting Saxon prefixes and suffixes to Latin radicals: *be-siege*, *un-pretending*, *mis-construe*, *under-value*, *over-turn*; *large-ness*, *duke-dom*, *false-hood*, *grate-ful*, *motion-less*, *cease-less*. Sometimes, but seldom, the process has been reversed, as in *en-dear*, *dis-belief*, *re-light*, *eat-able*.

Last but not least, considerable additions to the English language from the Latin and also from the Greek have been made since the revival and increase of the classical studies in the fifteenth century. So great was the love of Latin phraseology, that an author of the seventeenth century, Sir Thomas Browne, exclaims: "If elegancy still proceedeth, and English pens maintain that stream we have of late observed to flow from many, we shall within a few years be fain to learn Latin to understand English". This process has greatly increased in the last centuries through the cultivation of arts and sciences, and will ever be carried on, in order to furnish terms for the denomination of new objects and ideas constantly starting into existence.⁴ Many of these terms, however, are hardly known to the learned, especially those technical terms which belong to particular arts and sciences.

Occasional additions to the English vocabulary have also been made from other languages, as the Dutch⁵, the Italian⁶,

¹ A number of words retain the French accent, when used as verbs, but change it for the English, when taking the place of a substantive: *accent* and to *accént*, *cóncert* and to *concért*, *lámént* and to *lamént*, *tórmént* and to *tormént*, *ínsult* and to *insúlt*, *présent* and to *présént*.

² All French verbs follow the weak conjugation.

³ The use of *more* and *most* in the comparison of adjectives is of a recent date. Ascham wrote *inventivest*, Bacon *honourablest* and *ancienter*, Fuller *eminenteſt*, *eloquenter*, Sheridan still *beautiſteſt* and Coleridge *ſaſteſt*; similar forms occur in a great number with Shakespeare.

⁴ Problem, corollary, telegraph and its derivatives, telephone, photograph and phonograph, quantitative and qualitative, positive and negative, inverse ratio etc.

⁵ Dutch are: *Boom*, *dogger*, *schooner*, *skates*, *skipper*, *sloop*, *smack*, to *smuggle* etc.

⁶ Italian: *Ambuscade*, *bagatelle*, *balcony*, *baldachin*, *balustrade*, *bandit*, *bravo*, *buffoon*, *burlesque*, *bust*, *cadence*, *cascade*, *cameo*, *canto*, *caricature*, *carnival*, *cartoon*, *casemate*, *casino*, *catafalque*, *cavalcade*, char-

the Arabic¹, the Persian², the Turkish³, the Spanish⁴, the Indian⁵, the Malay⁶, the Hindostanee⁷, the Chinese⁸ and single words from other languages.⁹

The English language, therefore, must be considered a composite one, whose foreign elements form a decided majority in its vocabulary. In spite of this, the English remains an essentially Germanic language, and though the substantial parts of the sentences, as nouns, adjectives, and verbs, are chiefly of foreign derivation, the connecting links, however, as articles, pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, numerals¹⁰, auxiliary verbs, in

latan, citadel, concert, conversazione, corridor, cupola, dilettante, ditto, doge, domino, fiasco, filagree, fresco, gazette, gondola, gonfalon, grotto, gusto, harlequin, imbroglio, inamorato, lava, lazaretto, macaroni, madonna, madrigal, malaria, manifesto, masquerade, motto, moustachio, nuncio, opera, oratorio, pantaloons, parapet, pedant, piano, forte, piaster, piazza, porcelain, portico, protocol, regatta, ruffian, serenade, seraglio, sirocco, sketch, solo, sonnet, stanza, stiletto, stucco, studio, terrace, terracotta, torso, umbrella, vedette, violoncello, virtuoso, vista, volcano.

¹ Arabic: Algebra, almanach, cypher, nadir, talisman, zenith, zero; alcohol, alembic, alkali, elixir, amber, apricot, arrack, artichoke, bournous, camphor, carmine, coffee, cotton, crimson, gazelle, endive, giraffe, jar, jasmin, lemon, mattress, mummy, musk, saffron, popinjay, sherbet, syrup, shrub, sofa, sugar, talk, tamarind, admiral, alcove, alguazil, amulet, arsenal, assassin, barbican, caliph, caffre, carat, caravan, dey, divan, dragoman, emir, fakir, felucca, firman, harem, hazard, hegira, houri, islam, koran, magazine, mameluke, minaret, monsoon, mosque, mufti, mussulman, nabob, quintal, razzia, sahara, scheik, simoom, sirocco, sultan, tarif, vizir.

² Persian: Azure, bazaar, caravanserai, check, chess, dervish, jackal, lilac, nectarine, orange, pagoda, saraband, sash, scarlet, sepoy, shawl, taffeta, tambour, turban, zemindar, zenana.

³ Turkish: Bey, bosh (empty), caftan, fez, janissary, odalisk, tulip, xebek.

⁴ Spanish: Albino, alligator, armada, armadillo, barricade, bastinado, bolero, bravado, buffalo, cannibal, cargo, cartel, cigar, creole, don, duenna, eldorado, fandango, grandee etc.

⁵ Indian: Ananas, canoe, caoutchouc, chocolate, cocoa, condor, guano, hamoc, jaguar, lama, maize, mocassin, opossum, pampas, pirogue, potato, tomahawk, wampum, wigwam, hurricane.

⁶ Malay: Bamboo, cassiowary, gong, gutta-percha, orang-utang, rattan, sago, upas.

⁷ Hindostance: Banian, bungalow, calico, chintz, jungle, lac, muslin, punch, raja, rupee, toddy etc.

⁸ Chinese: Tea, hyson, souchong, junk (a boat), hong (European), nankeen.

⁹ Hungarian: hussar; Polish: hetman; Russian: drosky, ukase; Polynesian: tattoo; Tartarian: caviar, steppe; African dialects: chimpanzee, fetich, gnu, kraal, zebra.

¹⁰ All numbers up to 'million' are German, except 'second.'

fact the whole structure of the language is entirely German. Of genuine German origin are likewise all the terms of affection and passion and of the commonest objects and occupations.

Thus English has become the richest, the most flexible and expressive language, equally capable of expressing with precision the subtlest thoughts and conceptions of the human mind in prose, as well as the most delicate shades of sentiments and passions in poetical diction.

CHAPTER II.

ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD,* c. 600—1100.

§ 4.

The language of the Saxon conquerors was an unmixed idiom, although of various Low-German dialects of which two were chiefly spoken later: the Saxon in the South and the Anglian or Englisc in the North. In the literary monuments, the language is sometimes called Saxon, sometimes Englisc, which later became the predominant appellation. The name of Anglo-Saxon was only used for the people, not for the language.

This Englisc language, mostly resembling the Old-Friesic dialect, was an inflected one: the nouns possessed all cases, except the vocative and the ablative, and likewise all the adjectives, pronouns, and articles were declined. The verbs had their infinitives in 'an', and different forms in the singular and the plural.

Sing. nom.	<i>fisc</i> (<i>fish</i>).	<i>Helpan</i> , to help.	Pres. sing.	<i>Helpē</i>
gen.	<i>fisces</i>			<i>hilpest</i>
dat.	<i>fisce</i>			<i>hilpeth</i>
acc.	<i>fisc</i>		Pres. plur.	<i>hēlpath</i>
instr.	<i>fisce</i>			(all 3 pers.)
Plur. nom.	<i>fiscas</i>		Pret. sing.	<i>healp</i>
gen.	<i>fisca</i>			<i>hulpe</i>
dat.	<i>fiscum</i>			<i>healp.</i>
acc.	<i>fiscas</i>		plur.	<i>hulpon.</i>
instr.	—		Part. pres.	<i>helpende.</i>
			Part. past.	<i>holpen.</i>

The earliest MSS. of the Anglo-Saxon literature date from the 9th century. It almost neglected that sort of poetry which

is founded upon national legends. We possess no poem whose hero is of Anglo-Saxon origin; only a few historical poems, composed perhaps before the migration to Britain, have been handed down by the Scopas¹ or Gleemen², the minstrels of the time. They reflect the warlike, barbarous spirit of the age, betokening, however, a great love of home and nature. With the commencement of christianity, religious poetry took the foremost place, furnishing numbers of legends of saints, marvels and visions tinctured with heathen sentiments, of prayers and hymns, of allegorical poems and paraphrases of Scriptural parts, intended for the moral improvement of the lower classes.³ The poetry was without metre or rhyme, only marked by accentuation, four risings or accents occurring in each perfect line, and alliteration, as in all ancient Teutonic languages. Its diction was highly elliptical, especially omitting the connecting particles, and adorned with metaphorical expressions.

In most cases, the original shape of those poetries has been altered or lost, as they were only transferred by song.

§ 5.

EPIC POETRY.

*The Tale of Beowulf**, MS. of the 10th century, was most likely written in the earlier half of the 6th century before the conquest of Britain, and is the most important and interesting for its lively illustrations of early Gothic days. Its scene must be sought in Scandinavia; England is not mentioned in it.

Beowulf, a Scandinavian prince of superhuman strength, accomplishes two great exploits. In the first he sets out with fourteen of his companions to release Hrothgar, King of Denmark, from a fiendish cannibal, called Grendel, that infests his hall, and who, after devouring a sleeping warrior, is attacked by Beowulf, who pulls out his arm and shoulder. Mortally wounded, he flees to a fen where he dies. But in the following night, Grendel's mother comes to the hall to avenge the death of her son, destroying another of Beowulf's warriors. Beowulf pursues her to the fen, and after a terrible fight, he slays her with the enchanted sword which he finds there. In the second adventure, which he undertakes in his old age and in his own country, he destroys a fiery dragon watching a great treasure, but loses his life through the glowing breath of the frightful monster.

¹ Sing. Scóp, from sceppan, to shape, German *schaffen*.

² From gleo, brilliancy, hilarity, mirth.

³ Cf. p. 5, Notes.

From the Tale of Beowulf.

(Chapter XI.)

* p com of mōre	under mist- hleoðum ¹
There came from (the) moor,	under misty cliffs
Grendel gongan²,	godes yrre bär;
Grendel going,	God's ire (he) bore;
Mynte se man-scaða³	manna⁴ cynnes
Meant this man-destroyer	of mankind
sumne besyrwan⁵	in sele⁶ þam heán⁷,
some one to entrap	in hall that high (one),
wōd⁸ under wolcenum⁹	to þas þe¹⁰ he win-reced,
(he) went under clouds	till that he (the) friendly hall,
gold-sele gumena¹¹	gearwost¹² visse¹³
(the) golden hall of men	most ready knew
fattum fahne.	Ne woes þat forma sið,
with plates glittering.	Nor was that (the) first time
þat he Hrödgåres	ham gesohte¹⁵:
that he Hrödgår's	home sought:
naefre he on¹⁶ aldur-dagum¹⁷	aer ne siððan,
never he in life-days,	ere nor since,
heardran¹⁸ hale¹⁹	heal-degnas²⁰ fand!
(a) braver hero,	hall champions found!

*The Battle of Finnesburgh** relates the bloody story of an exterminating slaughter on the continent. Sixty Danes are surprised at Finnesburgh by Finn of Friesland; he loses all his men, the castle is sacked.

*The Gleeman's or Traveller's Song** or *Scopes widsith* (the gleeman's far journey), interesting for its curious geographi-

* **p** & **ð** = th; (tenuis & media). ¹ Compound substantives are formed as in German by juxtaposition; *hleoðum*, dat. plur. ² Infinitive; other forms are *gán* and *gangan*. ³ *Scāða* and *sceaða*; cf. English *to scath*, Germ. *schädigen*. ⁴ Gen. plur. of *man*. ⁵ In alliteration the prefix is not taken into account. ⁶ Germ. *Saal*. ⁷ *heán*, dat. sing. of *headh*, *heā* = high. ⁸ Imperf. of *vadan*, to pass through; cf. Germ. *waten*. ⁹ Dat. plur. of *wolcen*, Germ. *Woike*. ¹⁰ *þe*, rel. pron. is often used with the demonstr. pron. ¹¹ Gen. plur. of *gum* = man. ¹² Superl. of *gearne*, Old Germ. *garo*, Germ. *gar* = ready. The syllable *ge* in *gearwost* belongs to the root of the word. ¹³ Imperf. sing. of *wisan*, to know, cf. *to wit*, Germ. *nissen*. ¹⁴ Dat. plur. of *fæt* (fatu?) = plate. ¹⁵ Imperf. sing. of *ge-sécan*, to seek. ¹⁶ All vowels possess an alliterative affinity among each other. ¹⁷ *Aldor* and *ealdor* = life; *ealdor-dagum*, dat. plur. = in the days of life. ¹⁸ Compar. of *heard* = hard. ¹⁹ Cf. Germ. *Held*. ²⁰ Acc. plur. of *healdegn*, a champion or guard of the hall; cf. Germ. *Degen*.

cal traditions and particularly for the many names of popular kings and heroes.

*The Death of Byrhtnoth.** The hero leads an expedition against the Normans, who have landed on the English coast. He is slain in the combat at Maldon.

*Waldere**, consisting of two epic fragments, the first containing the speech of Hildeguth, inciting Walter of Aquitain to fight against Gunther, the second a dialogue between Gunther and Waldere.

*Deor, the Scald's Complaint**, is the only preserved Anglo-Saxon song. Deor, a gleeman, sought comfort for suffered wrongs in the memory of similar fates of great men, thus preserving a number of fine old legends.

§ 6.

CAEDMON.*

Among the religious poems, the first place is occupied by *The Metrical Paraphrase of the Gospel*, ascribed to Caedmon († 680), a monk of Streoneshalh, later called Whitby in Yorkshire. His poems must, according to Bede, be set down about the year 670, which dates the beginning of poetry in England; the MS. is of the 10th century.

Caedmon, so the Venerable Bede tells us, was a cowherd, entirely deprived of the gift of song, which being of great mortification to him, he one night left the hall, quite distressed in mind. In his troubled dreams a man appeared to him, who, not heeding his excuses, commanded him to sing of the "Beginning of all Created Things." Sweet, original verses flowed from his lips, and this heavenly gift did not forsake him, when he awoke. Great was the general astonishment; and after having proved his new-found skill on a given passage of the Bible, he was enrolled among the monks and spent his life in composing religious poetry, rendering the Scripture narratives into popular verse. "Thus he sang", says Bede, "of the Creation of the World, of the origin of the human race, of the whole Genesis, and many other stories of the Old and the New Testament."

The following works are generally ascribed to him: *A Hymn**; *Genesis**, a paraphrase, mostly drawn from apocryphical sources;

*Exodus**, an epic song about the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea and the destruction of the Egyptians; *Daniel*, another paraphrase, and *Christ** and *Satan**

Of these works the first only, though not of great literary value, can with certainty be considered as having been written by Caedmon.

§ 7.

CYNEWULF.*

About his life, nothing certain is known. He probably lived in the 8th century and perhaps in Northumbria, where he seems to have received his education in a monastery and then to have led the gay and unsteady life of a secular minstrel. In his old age, he most likely retired to a quiet, contemplative life and died in solitude.

The poetical works attributed to Cynewulf must be divided into two groups, the first comprising four poems whose authenticity is ascertained by the name of Cynewulf itself occurring in them, both in runes and in the solution of riddles; the second contains a number of other poems of a doubtful origin. To the first group belong: *A Collection of Riddles**; *Christ**, a didactic poem depicting Christ's threefold coming, viz. his birth, his resurrection, and his return on the day of judgment; *Juliana** contains the story of the temptation, imprisonment, and death of a female martyr, called Juliana, under the emperor Maximian († 340); *Elene** relates Constantine's victory over the Huns, his baptism, and the arrival of his mother "Elene" at Jerusalem, where she finds the cross and the nails of Christ's crucifixion on mount Calvary.

The second group comprises: *Guthlac**, the name of the hero, an Anglian saint in the 7th and 8th centuries, who dwells on a mountain, inhabited by demons who attempt to destroy him. They carry him to Hell where God delivers him. The second part, relating his death, is superior to the first in poetical merit and probably written by another hand. The end is not preserved. The *Phoenix** treats the subject of a Latin poem in the Christian spirit. *Andreas** tells the legend of the liberation of the apostle Matthew from the hands of the Mermedons through the help of Andreas, assisted by Christ and two angels. He himself is tortured, but he works a great wonder and the final conversion of the enemies.

Other works attributed to Cynewulf, however without any sufficient evidences, are *The Vision of the Holy Rod*, *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, *The Ruine*, and some others of a didactic character.

§ 8.

MISCELLANEOUS LITERARY MONUMENTS.

Some other poetical remains of this age are:

*Salomon and Saturn**¹, consisting of two parts, the first of which is a dialogue on the Lord's Prayer, the second a treatise on death, human life, the Fall of Angels etc.

*Judith**¹, an epic fragment of great excellency, superior to any poem of a similar character preserved of this time.

*Genesis**¹ (the younger), probably a translation of an Old-Saxon poem, written on the Continent and in the same spirit as the Heliand. It treats of the Creation and the Fall of Man.

*Bē Dōmes Dāge**¹, of a somewhat later date, is a description of the Last Day.

Besides these, there are preserved a number of spells or magic formulas, relics of the pagan times, homilies, hymns, psalms, prayers, and didactic fragments on various subjects, mostly preserved in the *Exeter Book**¹ (Codex Exoniensis) and the *Vercelli-Book**¹ (Codex Vercellensis) of the 11th century, thus called from the places where the MSS. are guarded; they are generally ascribed to Cynewulf. The second only contains also writings in prose.

§ 9.

PROSE-WRITING.

Prose-writing properly begins with Aelfred the Great*¹ (871—901), the “father of English prose”, through whose bright example a great impulse was given to the use of the vernacular tongue, especially in works of religious edification and popular instruction. Whilst he invited over learned men from the Continent and established convents and schools, he himself, the great warrior, law-giver, and governor, spent great part of his time in translating Latin authors into his own language with untiring industry. For it was the great aim of his life, by his own example to revive learning and general culture, so deeply neglected in his time. Thus he rendered his capital of Winchester the centre of learning and the cradle of the English language.

Aelfred's chief translations are: *The Pastoral Rule of Gregory the Great** (*Cura Pastoris*), the most faithful of his translations; *Bede's Ecclesiastical History** (*historia ecclesiastica Anglorum*), a pretty faithful rendering; *The History of Orosius**, the first attempt at a universal history and, though an uncritical compilation, the chief authority for later historians; *Boetius, On the Consolations of Philosophy**, occupies the first rank among his translations; *The Metres of Boetius** in prose and in alliterative rhythms. Aelfred generally takes great liberties with his originals by omitting or adding, contracting or enlarging, interpolating and expatiating according to his personal feelings or intentions. In all these works, Aelfred, himself no great Latin scholar, was aided by Ascer, later bishop of Sherborn.

Another great light and eminent cultivator of the national language towards the close of the period was Aelfric (c. 955—1025), abbot of Ensham in Oxfordshire, also called "the Grammarian" from his *Latin Grammar**. He was the first translator of a great part of the Old Testament (the Pentateuch, Joshua, the Judges, and Esther, popular, shortened translations for the laity), and wrote eighty *Homilies** in two collections, each extending through the round of the whole year from the beginning to the end. Those of the first collection, called "homiliae catholicae", are distinguished for vast theological learning, clearness and elaboration of style, the second, containing his *Lives of Saints** (*Passiones Sanctorum*), are mostly written in rhythmical, alliterative prose. He, besides, left a number of dogmatical and didactic treatises. His numerous writings, distinguished for clearness and roundness of style, exercised a great influence on the literary activity of the clergy and the intellectual and moral life of the laity.

A prose monument of the highest importance is the *Saxon Chronicle**, a chronological record of important and trifling events since the time of Creation, continued and enlarged under Aelfred the Great and brought down to the death of Stephen 1154. It is the first history of any Teutonic nation, written in its own language.

Latin Literature. By far the greater portion of Anglo-Saxon literature was written in Latin by monks and ecclesiastics. The oldest contributors belong to the Celtic race, as St. Gildas, a Scotchman, and St. Columban, an Irishman, both of the 6th century. Then followed Aldhelm, Abbot of Malmesbury, end of the 7th century; The Venerable Bede (673—735) who spent his life in the convent of Jarrow in "learning, teaching, and writing". He left 45 works of great and varied erudition, embracing all

sciences. St. Boniface († 755) (Winfrid), the "Apostle of the Germans", left a collection of letters; Alcuin of York (735—804) passed his later years at the court of Charlemagne; John Scotus Eriugena († 877) lived at the court of Charles the Bald; Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote *The Benedictine Rule* with an underlined Saxon translation.

CHAPTER III.

§ 10.

THE AGE OF TRANSITION (SEMI-SAXON) 1100—1250.*

Henry I. 1100—1135.	Richard I 1189—1199.
Stephen 1135—1154.	John 1199—1216.
Henry II. 1154—1189.	Henry III. 1216—1272.

The two centuries which followed the Norman conquest were a time of conflict between the two hostile elements, the Saxons and the Normans. Through many rigorous measures and institutions, most of which were already embodied in the famous "Domesday-Book" of William the Conqueror, the former descended to an oppressed and servile class, whilst their lands were divided into 60,000 fiefs and bestowed on Norman lords. Tracts of inhabited country were depopulated and transformed into forests of chase, and the high offices in Church and State were confided to the Norman clergy and nobility. This system of oppression, together with the intellectual superiority of the conquering race, produced a strong hatred between the two classes, and it required several ages, before they and their languages blended into one.

This process of amalgamation or transformation of the Normans into English was already prepared under Henry I. particularly by intermarriages. On the accession of Henry II., the Norman name had disappeared, and the descendants of the victors of Hastings were proud of their English nationality.

Various important political events of the 13th century also contributed to facilitate the gradual approach of the two races. Since the loss of Normandy (1204), the constant intercourse with the mother-country was broken. In the year 1215 "Magna Charta" was extorted from King John, which became the basis of England's future representative constitution, blending the lower people's rights with those of the nobility. Frequent wars and conquests in France created common sympathies, and the

general hostility against the numerous foreigners, crowding into England and obtaining the first and most lucrative posts, and the exorbitant exactions and usurpations of the Roman see, joined the nation in one common feeling and interest.

Great social changes had also taken place since the time of the conquest through the introduction of the feudal system, which had been fully developed among the Normans. Along with it, chivalry spread its refining influence throughout the country; learning and arts were cultivated. William I. and nearly all his successors were well educated and patronized learning, though their personal characters were little less than despicable. The 12th century, opening with Beauclerc (Henry I.), was particularly distinguished for the cultivation of classical studies spreading from France along with the *Romances*, which took the place of the old Saxon songs and found eager and able imitators and translators among the clergy and the minstrels.

Equally great were the effects which the invasion produced on the national language. During the first two centuries, no fusion of the two idioms took place, though both of them suffered a gradual and incessant process of change. The French remained the language of the Church, the courts of justice, the Parliament and the schools, in fact of all educated classes, whilst the Saxon idiom, no longer cultivated, lost much of its original perfection and harmony; yet it remained triumphant in the struggle and preserved its Teutonic structure and genius.

The most remarkable changes in the language during this space of time were a softening of the inflections 'an' into 'en', and of 'a, o, u' into 'e'. The difference of gender with inanimate beings was disregarded, and the plural was formed in 'es'; the infinitive was used in connection with the preposition 'to'. Three principal dialects were spoken and distinguished by the plural form in the present indicative, viz. 'es' in the North, 'en' in the Midland counties, and 'eth' in the South.

The literary works of the time, for the greater part religious and narrative, were mostly written in Latin and French. The literary remains, composed in the English language, were romances and chronicles in verse, in which alliteration was still frequently observed, occasionally mixed with rhyme.

34
54
89
19
12

§ 11.

LITERARY MONUMENTS.

Four chief monuments are of importance for the study of the language and the spirit of the age: Layamon's *Brut*, *The Ormulum*, *The Ancren Riwle*, and *The Owl and the Nightingale*.

Layamon's *Brut*¹ or *Chronicle of Britain**¹, (about 1205), the first English poem after the conquest, is an amplified translation from the French of Wace's *Brut d'Angleterre*², who in his turn had translated it from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Britons* (vide p. 26). This work is highly interesting for representing the current speech of the writer's time, its style being lofty and animated, irregularly mixing alliteration and rhyme. In above 30,000 short lines it contains only about 50 French words. Layamon was a priest at Ernley on the Severn in Worcestershire.

From Layamon's *Brut*.

To þere ¹ midnihte	þa men weoren aslepe,
At the midnight	when men were asleep,
Arður forð him wende	aðelest alre kinge.
Arthur forth him went	noblest of all kings.
Biforen rad heore lod cniht ²	þat hit was daelihit
Before rode their guide	till it was daylight
Heo lihten of heore steden	and rihten ³ heore iweden ⁴
They alighted from their steeds	and righted their weeds.
þa iseyn ⁵ heo nawiht ⁶ feorren	a muchel fur smokien
Then saw they not far	a great fire smoke
uppen ane hulle	mid sae-ulode bi ⁷ -ullen;
upon a hill	by sea-flood surrounded;

¹ Dat. of the article fem. *þe*. ² A. S. *leðd*, Germ. *Leute*; *cniht* — knight, Germ. *Knecht*. ³ Germ. *richten* i. e. to adjust, to put aright.

⁴ Germ. obs. *Die Wat* (Uhland: „vierfältig Tuch zur Wat“) O. Germ. *wāt*, *wātt*. ⁵ The prefix *i*, A. S. *ge*, is frequently joined to the part. past, sometimes to the praet. ⁶ *nawiht*, from *no* and *wiht*, a being, Engl. naught, Germ. *nicht*; cf. *Bösenwicht*. ⁷ Germ. *be*, from all parts around (a particle).

¹ *Brut*, according to some from *Brutus*, the fabulous founder of the British monarchy, according to others from the Cymric “*brud*”, a rumour or history; cf. the French “*bruit*”.

and an oper hul þer wes swiðe heh
and another hill there was very high.
þae sae hine bifledde ful neh
the sea (around) him flowed full (very) nigh.

*The Ormulum**, (about 1215), so called by the author after his name Orm (Worm) or Ormin, is a series of metrical homilies on the lessons of the divine service, taken from the New Testament. It contains about 10,000 long lines, written in a phonetic system of spelling, doubling the consonant after any short vowel. Being composed in the North-East of England, it scarcely contains any trace of French words.

From the *Ormulum*.

(*The Beginning.*)

Nu, broþerr Wallterr, broþerr min
affterr þe flaeshess kinde;¹
annd broþerr min i Crisstenndom
þurh fulluhht² annd þurh trowwþe³
annd broþerr min i Godess hus,
yet o þe þride wise⁴
þurh patt witt⁵ hafenn⁶ takenn ba⁷
an reyhellboc⁸ to follyhenn⁹
unnderr kanunnkess¹⁰ had¹¹ annd lif,
swa summ¹² Sannt Awwstin¹³ sette;¹⁴
icc hafe don swa summ þu badd,
annd forþedd¹⁵ te þin wille,
icc hafe wennd¹⁶ inntill¹⁷ Ennglisch
Goddspelless¹⁸ hallyhe¹⁹ lare²⁰
affterr patt little witt²¹ patt me
min Drihhtin²² hafepþ lenedd.²³

*The Aneren Riwle** (Rule of Female Anchorites, i. e. nuns), is a code of monastic precepts in prose, written about the year 1220 in Dorsetshire. The style is simple, but graceful and dignified. The amount of French words is about four times greater than that of Layamon.

¹ Kindred, relationship. ² Baptism. ³ truth. ⁴ In the third wise. ⁵ Dual form of we, we both. ⁶ Inf. have. ⁷ both. ⁸ Rulebook, Germ. *Regelbuch*. ⁹ To follow, Germ. *folgen*. ¹⁰ ¹¹ a canonic's hood. ¹² so as. ¹³ St. Augustine. ¹⁴ Imperf. of to set. ¹⁵ furthered, promoted. ¹⁶ turned, Germ. *wenden*. ¹⁷ into. ¹⁸ Gospel's, from God and spellan = speak, tell. ¹⁹ Holy. ²⁰ Germ. *Lehre*. ²¹ wit, spirit. ²² Lord, O. G. *truhtin*. ²³ to lend, Germ. *leihen*, *leihen*.

*The Owl and the Nightingale** is a facetious, didactic poem, probably written about 1225. In 1800 well rhymed octosyllabics it contains an acrimonious disputation between those two birds on their respective powers and merits of song, in which the owl upholds the moral, and the nightingale the aesthetical point of view. The former is intended to represent the austere, ascetic clergy, the latter the merry and happy life of a layman. It abounds with sententious and proverbial sayings, and contains probably many political allusions.

This age was very fertile in religious writings, specially in homilies, hymns, and metrical *Lives of Saints**, translated from the French. Of these, the *Life of St. Katharine* is the most important, relating her life and martyrdom in Alexandria. The heroine is perhaps identical with the beautiful female philosopher Hypatia.

*The Poema morale** is a powerful sermon of repentance in verse, most impressively depicting the pains of Hell.

Mention must be made of the *Proverbs of Aelfred**, of which the writer is unknown.

*The Genesis and Exodus** (1250), two poems whose subjects are treated after a Latin source, and in which the old French metrical forms are successfully imitated, mark the close of this period.

§ 12.

THE EARLY ENGLISH PERIOD*, 1250—1360.

- Henry III. 1216—1272. Edward II. 1307—1327.
- Edward I. 1272—1307. Edward III. 1327—1377.

During this short period of about one hundred years, the transfusion of the two races made great progress, and their union was stronger riveted, especially when Henry III. was defeated and taken prisoner by his own subjects in the "Barons' War" at the battle of Lewes (1264). The most salutary consequence of this struggle was the representation of the boroughs in Parliament, the first commencement of the later House of Commons. The provisions of the same king and of Louis IX., that no subject of either country should have possessions in the other, produced a final and complete separation of the Anglo-Normans from their mother-country. The wars and triumphs of Edward III. in France since 1339 (Cressy 1346 and Poi-

tiers 1356) not only served to strengthen the union, but produced a strong anti-Gallican feeling in the minds of both the Anglo-Normans and the Saxons.

In the middle of the reign of Henry III., a blending of the two idioms was gradually taking place; it marks the beginning of the reconstruction of a national language, a process extending to the 15th century. The language of the conquerors being rich in terms relating to war, chivalry, law, architecture, dress, sports, and the table, furnished words and expressions of this kind in great number.¹ "All the words of dignity, state, honour, and pre-eminence, as sovereign, scepter, throne, realm, royalty, homage, prince, duke, count, chancellor, treasurer, palace, castle, hall, dome, with the two singular exceptions of king and earl, belong to the speech of the Conquerors."²

The influence which the foreign idiom exercised on the vernacular tongue, was a threefold: firstly, it produced a contraction and modification of the pronunciation of words: the sibilants 'g', 'ch', 'c' were introduced; secondly, the inflections of nouns and verbs were omitted — the final 'n' of the infinitive disappeared — and prepositions and auxiliaries adopted in their place; thirdly, French derivatives were introduced, and French prefixes and suffixes used to coin new words. Not rarely two words, one of either language, have been joined together to express one common idea, as *commonwealth*, *coachman*, *waist-coat* etc.

From the time of the Conquest, the documentary and epistolary language had been the Latin; since the year 1270, however, a sudden change brought into use the French, except in proclamations, which were generally made in the vernacular tongue.

The French, however, remained the language of all educated classes. In the Latin schools, the only living tongue taught was the French. Many nobles sent their sons to France to learn French. Thousands of English students studied at the University of Paris. The minstrels sang in French and were

¹ The peculiar mode of fusion between the two tongues has been aptly represented by W. Scott in his introductory chapter to *Ivanhoe*, where the common animals retain their Saxon appellations, when still tended by the Saxon serfs or bondsmen, but receive a French name, when served on the Norman tables, as "*ox*" and "*beef*", "*swine*" and "*pork*", "*sheep*" and "*mutton*", "*calf*" and "*veal*", "*deer*" and "*venison*".

² Trench, *Study of Words*, p. 98 ff.

welcomed in the hall; the bards, who sang in English, were sent to the kitchen. Classics were translated into French.

During this long struggle and process of amalgamation, English dialects were spoken by the great mass of the people, while the literary English language was slowly arising from one of the East-Midland dialects about Cambridge and Oxford, assimilating the elements of the French language — changing the pronunciation of s, x, and c into that of th — and being victorious in the end.

§ 13.

LITERARY MONUMENTS.

Most of the literary works were still written in Latin and French. The oldest monument in the English tongue of this period is remarkable both for its historical and linguistic importance, although but an awkward translation from the French original; it is the *Proclamation of Henry III.* of the year 1258, enforcing the authority of the laws and his counsellors.

Proclamation of Henry III.

Henr', purg Godes fultume¹ king on Engleneloande, lhoaverd² on Yrloand', duk on Norm' on Aquitain', and eorl on Aniow, send igretinge³ to alle hise holde⁴ ilaeerde⁵ and ileawede⁶ on Huntendon'schir'.

paet witen ye wel alle, paet we willen and vnnen⁷ paet
paet⁸ vre⁹ raedesmen,¹⁰ alle oper pe moare¹¹ dael of heom,
paet beop¹² ichosen¹³ purg us and purg paet loandes folk on
vre kuneriche, habbeb¹⁴ idon and schullen¹⁵ don in pe worp-
nesse¹⁶ of Gode and on vre treowphe¹⁷ for pe freme¹⁸ of pe
loande, purg pe besigte¹⁹ of pan toforeniseide²⁰ redesmen beo²¹
stedfaest and ilestinde²² in alle pinge abuten²³ aende."

¹ Assistance, help. ² Contract. of *lhoaf* or *laif*, *lof*, English *loaf*, Germ. *Laib* and *ward* — warden, keeper; English *lord* — the giver of bread. ³ *i* = *ge*, a prefix; more frequently *grētinge* and *grētunge* — greeting. ⁴ Germ. *hold*, adj. = friendly, dutiful. ⁵ Part. perf. of *ilderen*, to teach = learned. ⁶ laymen. ⁷ Germ. *gönnen*, to favour or grant. ⁸ Cf. p. 11, note 10. ⁹ our. ¹⁰ counsellors, Germ. *Ratsmänner*. ¹¹ The greater part of those. ¹² Third pers. plur. pres. ind. of *beōn*, to be. ¹³ Part. perf. of *icheosen*, to choose. ¹⁴ Third pers. plur. pres. ind. of *habban*, to have. ¹⁵ Third pers. plur. ¹⁶ In the honour of —. ¹⁷ Loyalty, Germ. *Treue*. ¹⁸ A. S. *fremu*, Germ. *Frommen* ("zu nutz und frommen") — profit, advantage. ¹⁹ *be* and *sih* — foresight, provision. ²⁰ Aforesaid. ²¹ Conj. pres. sing. of *bedn*. ²² Part. pres. of *laesten*, to last. ²³ without.

Of more genuine English — the so-called “King’s English”, which was spoken at the court about the person of the King — is a letter of Henry, Prince of Wales (afterwards Henry V.), written to his father in 1402. It is one of the earliest letters written in English.

“My soverain lord and fader, I Recomande me to yowr good and gracieux lordship, as humbly as I can, desiring to heere as good tydingges of yow and yowr hye estat, as ever did liege man of his soverain lord. And, Sir, I trust to God that ye shall have now a companie comyng with my brother of Bedford that ye shall like wel, in good feith, as hit is do me wite.¹ Neverthelatter my brothers maing² have I seyn, which is right a tal meyny. And so schal ye se of thaym that be of yowr other Captaines leding, of which I sende you al the names in a rolle be (by) the berer of this. etc. etc.

The most considerable works of this epoch are two chronicles in verse, the first by Robert of Gloucester* (about 1300), comprising the time of the legendary age of Brutus to the close of Henry III.’s reign. To the same writer a collection of *Lives of Saints* has also been ascribed. The author of the second chronicle is Robert Manning or Robert de Brunne* (about 1340); it consists of two parts, both translations, the first from *Wace’s Brut*, and the second from *Peter de Langtoft’s Chronicle*.

From the Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester.

Ipus com lo! Engelond into Normandies hond,
and pe Normans ne coupe¹ speke þo² bote³ her owe⁴ speche,
and speke French as hii dude⁵ atom,⁶ and hor children dude
also teche,
so þat heiemen⁷ of þys lond, þat of hor blod come,
holdeð al þulke⁸ speche þat hii⁹ of him nome;
vor bote¹⁰ a man conne Frenss, me¹¹ telp¹² of him lute;¹³
ac lowe men¹⁴ holdep¹⁵ to Engliss and to hor owe speche
yute.¹⁵

¹ Knew not. ² Then or there. ³ But, except. ⁴ Own. ⁵ As (they) did. ⁶ At home. ⁷ Highmen. ⁸ The-ilk = such. ⁹ That they. ¹⁰ For unless. ¹¹ Men. ¹² Reckon or tell. ¹³ Very little. ¹⁴ But low-men. ¹⁵ Yet.

¹ Let me know. ² Company, Germ. Menge.

Ich wene¹⁶ per ne beþ in al þe world contreyes none
 þat ne holdeþ to hor oþre speche, bote Engelond one.
 Ac wel me wot¹⁷ nor to conne boþe wel it is;
 vor þe more þat a mon can, þe more wurþe he is.

The warlike, national songs of Lawrence Minot* († 1352) occupy a prominent rank among the popular poems of the age. In a refined, powerful, and sometimes triumphant tone, he describes ten battles and victories of Edward III. over the Scotch and the French. The verses are rhymed and occasionally alliterative, the dialect akin to the Scotch.

Another famous poem of great popularity is *The Vision of Piers (Peter) Ploughman**, probably written by a monk, named William Langland. Though completed only about the year 1362, it may still be included in this period for its air of antiquity, effected by the regular use of the old alliterative system. It is a religious allegory in the satirical spirit of the later Puritans, with whom it became a favourite book. Its subject is much alike that of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*: the impediments and temptations in our mortal life.

The poet after a ramble through the Malvern Hills on a May morning falls asleep and sees a series of twenty dreams or visions, which he relates in an allegorical form, scourging the corruptions of the time, especially the abuses of the Church, and the ignorance, hypocrisy, sensuality, in fact, all the vices of the ecclesiastics, without attacking, however, any of the doctrines of the Roman Church.

*The Land of Cockayne**, a satire on the slatternly life of the monks, was written about this time.

The most numerous and most popular poems of the time were *The Romances*, translations or imitations of Norman originals, constituting in the main four groups or cycles: *King Arthur and his Round Table**, *Charlemagne*, *The Life and Exploits of Alexander*, and *The Siege of Troy*.

Separate romances are:

*King Horn**, relating the adventurous life and manifold exploits of the hero, most likely of Scandinavian origin.

*Havelok the Dane**, of a similar character and metrical form as the former.

*Guy of Warwick** relates the knight's renunciation of his wealth and his wife, his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, his return and victory over the giant Colbrand, his unknown sojourn at his castle, and his life and death as an eremite in the forest of

¹⁶ I ween, think, Germ. *wähnen*. ¹⁷ But well men wot (knew).

the Ardennes. It is written in the ballad measure rhyming by pairs.

*William of Palerme**. In his strange adventures the hero is protected by the Prince Alfons of Castillane in the guise of a werewolf, and gains the hand of the daughter of the Roman emperor. Its metrical form are alliterative long lines.

*Sir Gowther** contains the varied legends of Robert the Devil; the scene is Austria. It contains 63 stanzas of twelve lines.

*Beves of Hampton**, a compound of curious adventures and exploits against giants and drakes.

*St. Graal**. This was said to be the dish from which Christ ate The Last Supper. Joseph of Arimathea caught in it the blood from His wounds; then it became invisible and revealed itself only to a pure knight, Sir Galahad, who, having seen it, prayed for death. The most important writer of romances about king Arthur and the St. Graal. was Walter Mapes in the 11th century.

The religious poetry of the time is very abundant; it was produced by the monks, whose influence, however, was broken towards the end of this period. There are to be mentioned:

*The Handlyng Synne** (a manual of sins) by Robert Manning (1303);

*Cursor Mundi**, a metrical translation of the O. and N. T. mixed with legends of saints (1320),

*The Poems of William of Shorham** (1327),

*Ayenbite of Innyt** (the bite of conscience) translated from the French (1340) by dan Michel;

*The Pricke of Conscience** by Rich. Rolle de Hampole (1340);

The Harrowing of Hell etc.

A complete list of names of Latin writers would be out of place here. The most noteworthy of them were either theologians or chroniclers: Lancfranc (1005—1089), a native of Italy and afterwards the head of a school in Normandy, was made archbishop of Canterbury by William the Conqueror after the deposition of the Saxon Stigand. He founded a new school of learning and literature in England. Anselm (1033—1109), also an Italian by birth and successor of Lancfranc, composed a great number of works on various subjects and had a great influence on learning in England. Alexander Hales († 1245), "the Irrefragable Doctor", lived and taught abroad; Johannes Duns Scotus († 1308), "the Subtle Doctor", lived at Oxford and in Paris; William of Occam (1308—47)

"the Invincible Doctor" and the head of the school of "Nominalists",¹ lived at the court of the German emperor; Roger Bacon (1214—1292), a Franciscan friar and great investigator of physical science, through his stupendous knowledge gained the reputation of a wizard.

Three Latin chroniclers deserve to be mentioned in this place: William of Malmesbury (1140) wrote a *History of the English Kings* in two books, abounding in stories of miracles and prodigies, and Geoffrey of Monmouth (about 1150), who compiled a more interesting *History of the Britons*, in which he saved from oblivion the fine old legends of the Celts, amongst which that of King Arthur and his Knights, mixing facts and fictions in an attractive way. It was translated into French by Wace (1155), from whom Layamon (vide p. 18) retranslated it into English. Ralph Higden composed a work which he called *Polychronicon*, a universal history in 7 books, which was translated into English and printed by W. Caxton in 1482.

CHAPTER IV.

§ 14.

THE AGE OF CHAUCER (MIDDLE ENGLISH)*, 1360—1450.

Edward III. 1327—1377. Henry IV. 1399—1413.

Richard II. 1377—1399. Henry V. 1413—1422.

Henry VI. 1422—1461.

This space of time of about one hundred years includes the continued progress of social amalgamation and of the reconstruction and final settlement of the English tongue. It also marks the origin of the English nationality and literature, which are the results of great events and changes of a political, social, and religious character.

The wars of Edward III. and Henry V. in France (Agincourt 1415) had not only served to efface the last traces of distinction and hostility between the two races, but also to awaken that national pride, so characteristic with the English people, which ever since has been fostered by a high degree of political liberty and material welfare of the nation. Besides, a new spirit was arising, manifesting itself in the gradual decay of feudalism, the decline of the supremacy of the papal power, and a great intellectual and ecclesiastical progress: schools and colleges were founded; abuses in the Church were resisted by the laity

¹ A sect of scholastic philosophers founded in the 11th century by John Roscelin, a churchman of Compiègne, who maintained that universals or general terms do not represent real existences, but are merely names. Their opponents were the realists.

and the Parliament; Wyclif translated the Bible and opposed the Roman see, and Chaucer, the most perfect type of his time, wrote his immortal works, thus highly contributing towards the regulation and perfection of the English language and inaugurating the dawn of English literature. Since the middle of the 14th century, pupils began to construe their Latin lessons in English. In 1362 it was provided by statute of Parliament (written in French!) that the English language might be used in the courts of justice — the French being too little known. — However, the latter still remained the language for all the reports of law cases till the middle of the 17th century, and the English laws were couched in French until the reign of Henry VII. The first English law dates from the year 1485, yet still with a French translation. Although in 1362 the Parliament had been opened for the first time by an English speech, still all the acts were recorded in French till Henry VII. Moreover, the House of Lords continued to use the French language up to the year 1483. From this year only, the English may be considered as the domineering language in the kingdom.

The English of this period was already much alike the language of the present day: it was mostly differing in the pronunciation of those syllables which gradually became mute or were entirely dropped. The part. pres. in 'ande' or 'inde' changed into 'ing' in the southern and midland dialects.

A great influx of French words continued to take place, accommodating themselves, however, to the Germanic law of accentuation by placing the emphasis on the root of the word. With the middle of the 14th century begins the brightest era of English minstrelsy. The chief product of the literature of the time, therefore, was poetry, among which that of Chaucer occupies the first rank.

POETICAL LITERATURE.

§ 15.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER*, c. 1340—1400.

Geoffrey Chaucer, called the "Father of English Poetry", was born in London, and according to recent researches, about the year 1340. He most probably studied the law at Cambridge. Through the favour of his patron, John of Ghent, third

son of Edward III., the handsome and accomplished young poet was received as page at the court, and in 1359 went with an army to France, where he was taken prisoner, but released in the following year. (Treaty of Bretigny 1360.) After his return, he was honoured with courtly favours, and was sent on several diplomatic missions to Italy, on which occasion he is said to have become acquainted with Petrarch († 1374) and Boccaccio († 1375). He at least acquired a thorough insight into the Italian literature, which exercised a great influence upon him, especially with regard to form and versification. In 1374 he was made Comptroller of the Wool-Customs in the Port of London, to which lucrative post other kingly grants and favours were added. During this time of prosperity, he married a lady of honour to Queen Philippa, herself called Philippa, whose sister afterwards became the wife of his patron John of Ghent, whereby the poet entered into relationship with the royal family. The king, who placed great confidence in his talents, from 1376 till 1378 employed him on other diplomatic missions to Flanders, France and Italy (Milan). After the death of Edward III., this royal sunshine continued for some time under his successor Richard II.; new gifts and honours were bestowed on the poet. In 1386 he became Member of Parliament and in 1389 "Clerk of the Works" or royal buildings; however in consequence of political troubles, he lost all his offices in 1391.

Under Henry of Lancaster, royal favour once more smiled upon him, when he received the grant of a royal pension in 1394 and other tokens of favour and protection. Being wearied with public life, he retired to his home at Woodstock to complete his great work, *The Canterbury Tales*. He died on the 25th of October 1400 and was the first of those illustrious poets, whose bones were buried in Westminster Abbey, in the so-called "Poets' Corner".

Chaucer's greatest and best work is the book of the famous *Canterbury Tales*, composed on a similar plan as Boccaccio's *Decamerone*. Its subject is the following:

A company of twenty-nine persons, gathering at the "Tabard Inn" in Southwark near London, are bound on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. In order to beguile the tediousness of their journey, they agree to relate stories, each two in going and two in returning. The Poet himself joins the party; and the Host of the Tabard is accepted as a guide and a kind of judge, by whose decision the prize,

consisting in a free entertainment at their return to the Inn, is to be awarded to the best teller of tales.

The motley company consists of persons of nearly all ranks and classes of society, except the very highest and the very lowest, and represents "a portrait gallery" of the social state of England in the 14th century. *Chivalry* is represented by a Knight and his son, a young Squire;¹ next in rank follows a Franklin, a freeholder or country gentleman. *Peasantry* has three representatives: a Ploughman, a Miller and a Reeve² or Bailiff.³ *The Clergy* forms the largest contingent, comprising a Prioress, attended by a Nun and three Priests; then follow a Benedictine Monk and a Begging Friar, a Sompnour⁴ and a Pardonner, last a poor secular Priest. *Learning* finds its representatives in a Clerk⁵ of Oxford, a Sergeant⁶ of Law, and a Doctor of Physic. *Trade and Industry* furnish a Merchant, the Wife of Bath, a Haberdasher,⁷ a Carpenter, a Weaver, a Dyer and a Tapestry-maker, who are attended by a cook. Then there is a Shipman, a Manciple⁸ or Steward of a College or religious house, the Poet and the Host.

The work, however, remained a fragment; only twenty-five stories being finished. It consists of two distinct portions, the first of which is the Prologue*, containing the exposition of the occasion of the gathering, the portraits of the members, their adventures on the road, and the commentaries on the Tales; the second comprises the Tales themselves. These are quite in accordance with the characters of the relating persons, and range between the tragic or pathetic, and the comic or humorous, representing the whole mediaeval literature, the legend, the romance, the allegory, the satire, the fable, and all sorts of tales. The finest of the serious class are the Clerk of Oxford's*,

¹ Squire, the same as *Esquire*, a shieldbearer, a title given to the younger sons of noblemen, from the O. Fr. escuyer, Lat. scutum, a shield.

² Reeve, A. S. *gerefa*, Germ. *Graf*, a governor; comp. *sheriff*, A. S. *scirgerefā*, the reeve of a "shire".

³ Bailiff, from French *bailly*, overseer, guardian, Lat. *bajulus*, a bearer.

⁴ Sompnour, from Lat. *submoneo*, to summon, to warn secretly. An officer, who summoned delinquents to appear in ecclesiastical courts.

⁵ Clerk, Lat. *clericus*, a clergyman, then a scholar, learning being originally confined to the clergy.

⁶ Sergeant of Law, a lawyer of the highest rank under a judge.

⁷ Haberdasher, of northern origin, a seller of small things.

⁸ Manciple, from Lat. *manceps* (*manus-capio*), one who undertakes something: a contractor.

the Knight's, and the Squire's Tales, of which the first, relating the touching story of "Griseldis", — "the model of heroic, wifely patience", — "is the crown and pearl of all the serious and pathetic narratives". The best of the comic class are the Miller's, the Reeve's and the Sompnour's Tales, which are distinguished for drollery and acute painting of human nature.

Only two of the tales are in prose, the story of Melibeus, the Poet's own contribution after a French original, and the Parson's or Priest's Tale, a tedious sermon on the doctrine and blessings of the Roman sacrament of penance and the remedies of the various sins. Most of the poetic tales are written in the heroic rhymed couplets, each line containing ten, sometimes eleven syllables.

The poet's talent is best revealed in his style, which from the simplest, coarsest, and even licentious tone, "rises to the highest flights of heroic, reflective, and even religious poetry." He is equally great in his portraying of characters and describing incidents, in the domains of the lofty and pathetic, as well as in those of the comic and trivial, thus giving us a faithful picture of the manners, the language, the intellectual and moral conditions of his time.

The sources from which the author drew his materials were the Latin, French, and Italian literatures; only a few are of his own invention.

Chaucer, besides, wrote a considerable number of other poetical works, of which the following may find a place:

The Dethe of Blanche the Duchesse, or *the Book of the Duchesse* is an allegorical poem on the death of the Duchess Blanche of Lancaster, first wife of John of Ghent (1369); *Troylus and Creseide* (1380), a heavy tragic poem in five books; *The Parlament of Foules* (1380) relates the vision of a dream, in which the poet is carried to the wonderful gardens of Venus, where a Parliament of birds decide on three eagles addressing their courtship to an eagle-maiden; *The House of Fame* (1381), an allegorical poem telling another vision of a dream; *The Legend of Good Women* (1385) contains the legends of a number of celebrated women of antiquity.

Of a doubtful origin are: *The Romaunt of the Rose*, a translation from the famous French allegory: Le Roman de la Rose; *Chaucer's Dream*, *The Flower and the Leaf*, an excellent specimen of the allegorical poetry, much cultivated in the author's time, treating of the inconstancy of beauty and

pleasure, as represented in the flower, and the stability of virtue, embodied in the leaf.

Chaucer's works in prose are: *Astrolabium*, an incomplete astronomical treatise, and Translations of Boetius 'On the Consolations of Philosophy'.

The language of Chaucer is very musical and quite in harmony with the subjects and sentiments. It contains an uncommonly great number of French words, which partly retain the French accent, as: *aventure, corâge, nature, laboire, langâge, contrée, honoûr*, which, together with the retention of a number of archaic terms, imparts to the language an antique character. It, besides, deviates from the English of the present day in the pronunciation of the final 'e' in words as *famé, lové, timé, largé, strangé, facé*, where it has become mute, or as in *songé, hosté, herdé, dedé, wildé* etc., where it has been dropped altogether. It likewise sounded the inflections 'es' in nouns: *officerés, knightés, squierés, ornamentiés*, and 'ed' in verbs: *encloséd, fost-réd, consideréd*; the infinitives terminated in 'en' and many of the past participles retained the prefix 'y' ('i'): *yfalle, yborne and yboren, ygendred, yfostred, ydressed, (ironne)*.

The merits of Chaucer with regard to the formation of the English language are very considerable. His enthusiastic disciple and imitator Thomas Occleve called him "the first finder of our fair language", and Spenser praised him as "the pure well of English undefiled." With respect to poetry in particular, he has enriched the English literature with a number of effective metres and stanzas. His literary deserts are analogous to those of Dante in the Italian: they both fixed and harmonized their native tongues and thus paved the way to their future national literatures.

From Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

The Clerkes Tale.

Pars secunda.

Nought fer fro *thilke* paleis honourable,¹
Wher as this markis *shape* his mariage,²
Ther stood a *thorpe*, of sighte *delitable* —³
In which that poure folk of that village
Hadden *hir bestes* and *hir herbergage*,⁴
And of *hir labour* toke *hir sustenance*,
After that the erthe yave hem habundance.

¹ such. ² shaped, formed. ³ village, Germ. *Dorf*, delightful ⁴ beasts, dwelling; Germ. *Herberge*.

Among this poure folk ther dwelt a man,
Which that was holden pourest of hem all:
But highe God somtime senden can.
His grace unto a litel oxes stall:
Janicola men of that thorpe him call.
A daughter had he, faire ynough to sight,
And Grisildis this yonge maiden *hight*.⁵

But for to speke of vertuous beautee,
Than was she on the fairest under sonne:
Ful pourely *yfostred* up was she:⁶
No *lickerous* lust was in hire herte *yronne*;⁷
Wel ofter of the well than of the tonne
She dranke, and for she wolde vertue plesse,
She knew wel labour, but non idel ese.

But though this mayden tendre were of age
Yet in the brest of hire virgintee
Ther was enclosed sad and ripe corage:
And in gret reverence and charitee
Hire olde poure fader fostred she:
A few sheep *spinning* on the feld she kept,⁸
She wolde not ben idel til she slept.

And whan she homward came, she wolde bring
Wortes and other herbes times oft⁹
The which she *shred* and sethe for hire living¹⁰
And made hire bed ful hard, and nothing soft:
And *ay* she *kept* hire fadres lif *on loft*¹¹
With every obeisance and diligence,
That child may don to fadres reverence.

Upon Grisilde, this poure creature,
Ful often sithe this markis sette his eye,
As he on hunting rode paraventure:
And whan it *fell* that he might hire espie,¹²
He not with wanton loking of folie
His eyen cast on hire, but in sad wise
Upon hire *chere* he wold him oft *avise*,¹³

Commending in his herte hire womanhede,
And eke hire vertue, passing any *wight*¹⁴
Of so yong age, as wel in chere as dede.
For though the peple have no gret insight
In vertue, he considered ful right
Hire bountee, and disposed that he wold
Wedde hire only, if ever he wedden shold.

⁵ Imperf. of *hatten*, Germ. *heissen*, to be named. ⁶ fostered, bred.
⁷ lickerish, dainty. p. p. run. ⁸ running and feeting about. ⁹ herbage, Germ. *Wurz*. ¹⁰ to shred, Germ. *kleinschneiden*, *schroten*. ¹¹ ay, always; kept it up. ¹² happened. ¹³ face, Fr. *chère*; look at, turn at. ¹⁴ a being, creature, Germ. *Wicht*.

The day of wedding came, but no wight can
 Tellen what woman that it shulde be,
 For which mervaille wondred many a man,
 And saiden, whan they were in privathee,
 Wol not our lord yet leve his vanitee?
 Wol he not wedde? alas, alas the while!
 Why wol he thus himself and us begile?

But natheless this markis *hath do make*¹⁵
 Of gemmes, sette in gold and in asure,
 Broches and ringes, for Grisildes sake,
 And of hire clothing toke he the mesure
 Of a maiden like unto hire stature,
 And eke of other ornamentes all,
 That unto *swiche* a wedding shulde fall.¹⁶

The time of *underne* of the same day¹⁷
 Approacheth, that this wedding shulde be,
 And all the paleis put was in array,
 Bot halle and chambres, eche in his degreee,
 Houses of office stuffed with plentee
 Ther mayest thou see of deinteous *vitaile*,¹⁸
 That may be found, as fer as *lasteth* Itaille.¹⁹

§ 16.

JOHN GOWER*, 1325—1408.

Of this poet's personality, whom Chaucer called "the moral Gower", little is known. His name has been coupled with that of Chaucer throughout the whole course of English literature, probably from their being both versed in the learning then most prized, and writing both in the language of the court, "the King's English", which became the standard form of the national speech.

It seems probable that Gower was descended from a noble Kentish family and brought up for the profession of a judge. During the last nine years of his life, he was blind, and in 1408 he is said to have died a rich man.

Besides a great number of French ballads, he wrote three great works in three languages, one in French, *Speculum Meditantis*, which is lost, another in Latin, *Vox Clamantis**, and a third, *Confessio Amantis**, in English, which was printed by Caxton in 1483 and has preserved him a lasting place in literature.

The subject of this long and tedious allegorical poem is

¹⁵ caused to be made. ¹⁶ such. ¹⁷ third hour, 9 o'clock. ¹⁸ victuals. ¹⁹ reaches.

the vanity of love, told in the form of a confession to a priest of Venus, called Genius, and occasionally relieved by stories and episodes drawn from mediaeval history and romance. The reading of the 10,000 lines, though smooth and easy, has been pronounced as "petrifying".

John Lydgate* (1373—1461), a Benedictine Monk and disciple of Chaucer living at the close of this epoch, was a prolific writer of miscellaneous poetry. After travelling in France and Italy, he opened a school for "verse-making and polite composition" in England, and wrote poems of all kinds on worldly and religious matters, masques, may-plays, farces, satirical ballads and hymns. His three greatest poetical works are *The Fall of Princes*, relating the tragic fate of great men and women, *The Storie of Thebes**, intended for an addition to the Canterbury Tales, and *The Book of Troye*, a translation from the Italian.

§ 17.

SCOTTISH POETS.

King James I. of Scotland, 1394—1436. The life of this royal poet is in itself a romantic poem with a tragic issue. When his father, Robert III., sent him to France to save him from his unscrupulous uncle, the Duke of Albany, the boy was taken off the Norfolk coast and brought a captive to the English Court in 1405, only then eleven years old. He received a noble education at Windsor, where he remained till the year 1424. His chief delights were music and poetry, especially that of Gower and Chaucer. Then he fell in love. "Early one morning looking from a window in the Round Tower of Windsor out upon a garden thick with May-leaves, and musical with the liquid song of nightingales, he saw walking below a lady, young, lovely, richly dressed and jewelled. This was Joan Beaufort, daughter of the Duke of Somerset." She afterwards became his wife. His love for her inspired his finest poem, *The Kings Quhair*, the subject of which is his love for Lady Joan Beaufort. It is written in imitation of Chaucer in the allegorical style of the age and consists of 197 stanzas of seven lines — 'rime royal' — containing many particulars of his life. Its finest passage is the description of the first sight of his future lady. The whole poem is of an exquisite refinement. James also is said to have written some pleasant comic poems in the Scotch dialect.

His faithful wife was worthy of this amiable prince; for when in 1437 he was stabbed by some rebellious barons, she shielded him with her body, receiving several wounds, before she could be wrenched from her dying lord.

From the Kings Quhair of James I. of Scotland.

Cast I down mine eyes again
 Where as I saw, walking under the Tower,
 Full secretly, new comen here to plain,¹
 The fairest or the freshest young flower
 That ever I saw, methought before that hour,
 For which sudden *abate*, anon *astart*²
 The blood of all my body to my heart.

And though I stood *abasit to a lite*³,
 No wonder was; for why? my wittis all
 Were so o'ercome with pleasanac and delight,
 Only through letting of my eyen fall,
 That suddenly my heart became her thrall.
 For ever of free will — for of menace
 There was no token in her sweete face.

And in my head I drew right hastily,
 And eftesoon I leant it out again,
 And saw her walk that very womanly
 With no wight mo', but only women twain.
 Then gan I study in myself, and sayn:
 'Ah, sweet! are ye a worldly creature,
 Or heavenly thing in likeness of nature?

'Or are ye god Cupidis own princess,
 And comin are to loose me out of band?
 Or are ye very Nature the goddess,
 That have depainted with your heavenly hand,
 This garden full of flowers as they stand?
 What shall I think, alas! what reverence
 Shall I *mister* unto your excellencie?⁴

'If ye a goddess be, and that ye like
 To do me pain, I may it not *astart*;⁵
 If ye be warldly wight, that *doth me sike*⁶
 Why *list* God make you so, my dearest heart,⁷
 To do a *seely* prisoner this smart,⁸
 That loves you all, and wot of nought but woe.
 And therefore mercy, sweet! sin' it is so'.

Of her array the form if I shall write,
 Towards her golden hair and rich attire,
 In fretwise couchit with pearlis white,⁹
 And great *balas leaming*¹⁰ as the fire,
 With mony an emeraut and fair sapphire;
 And on her head a chaplet fresh of hue,
 Of plumis *parted*¹¹ red, and white, and blue.

¹⁾ To play. ² Went and came. ³ Confounded for a little while.
⁴ Minister. ⁵ Fly or escape. ⁶ Makes me sigh. ⁷ Pleased, Germ. *gelüsten*.
⁸ Wretched. ⁹ Variegated like network. ¹⁰ Gems of a certain kind; gleaming. ¹¹ Divided into.

John Barbour* († 1396) was the first Scottish poet who wrote in the English language. His great epic poem, *Bruce** (1376), relates the adventures of the heroic King Robert in his struggle for the independence of Scotland, and the defeat of the English at Bannockburn (1314). Though its author calls it a "Romaunt", it is generally considered as trustworthy with regard to historical facts. It is superior to all contemporary productions, with the only exception of Chaucer's, and composed in the octosyllabic metre, afterwards made famous by Sir W. Scott.

Huchown*, a Scotchman and most probably of noble descent, was one of the first and most effective poets of the 14th century, and is to be ranked with John Barbour. Of the works which are ascribed to him, two are to be mentioned with a certainty as belonging to his pen: *Morte Arthure*, an alliterative poem treating Arthurs' fight against the Roman emperor Lucius Iberius, his victory and death, and *Susanne* drawn from the Old Testament.

Blind Harry*, another Scottish poet living at the end of the period, was a poor, wandering minstrel, reciting his poems for bread. He was the author of another national poem, called *Wallace**, after the name of the second great hero in Scotch national history. The language is rather rough, and the whole work of little historical merit, since the poet was only relating from popular legends.

PROSE LITERATURE.

§ 18.

JOHN WYCLIF*, 1324—1384.

Another prose-writer and a man of the highest merit was John Wyclif, called "the Morning Star of English Reformation". He was the son of a country-squire in Yorkshire, whence in his sixteenth year he removed to Oxford, where in rapid succession he gained the highest college honours, finally becoming the head of various colleges. He directed his first writings against the abuse of selling pardons and relics "all hot from Rome". Being made professor of divinity, he raised his voice against the abuses of the Church in general, declaring the Gospel the sole root of religion and denying several principles of the Roman Church, and loudly declaiming against the ignorance and profligacy of the clergy, especially of the Mendicant Friars. In consequence, he was accused of heresy and summoned to St. Paul's, where, however, the meeting was dissolved on the dispute arising, whether the defendant should sit or stand. In spite of the Pope's wrath, who directed five bulls against the "master of errors", Wyclif was never imprisoned or tortured;

for Richard II. held him in great esteem, and John of Ghent was his declared protector, besides, many powerful nobles and the whole laity being on his side.

After the recovery from a severe illness, Wyclif resumed his activity by an attack on the transubstantiation (1381), upon which he was dismissed from the university; the number of his adherents, however, was continually increasing. He retired into the country, to Lutterworth in Leicestershire, devoting his last years to the functions of a country parson and to the accomplishment of his great work, the *Translation of the Bible** of which he completed the New Testament¹. It was completed about the year 1383. Soon after the fulfilment of this great task, he died of paralysis in 1384. Twenty years after his death, his body was dug up and burnt, and his ashes scattered in the river Swift.

Although fragments of the Bible, the Psalms, Gospels and Epistles, had been translated at various times, his was the first complete version in English, which afterwards served as a basis for the authorised version, completed under James I. in 1611.

Besides this great work, which has given him an everlasting title to fame, Wyclif has written numerous Latin and English works. The characteristic feature of his English style is a manly ruggedness.

What Chaucer had been to his nation with regard to the language of poetry, Wyclif became concerning that of prose: the founder of the national English speech and of modern culture in England.

From John Wyclif's Translation of the Bible.

(Part of Luke XXIV.)

But in o day of the woke¹ ful eerli thei camen to the graue, and broughten swete smellynge spicis that thei hadden arayed². And thei foundun the stoon turnyd awey fro the graue. And thei geden in and foundun not the bodi of the Lord Jhesus. And it was don, the while thei weren astonyed in thought of this thing, lo twey men stodun bisisidis hem in schynnyng cloth. And whanne thei dredden and bowiden her semblaunt into erthe, thei seiden to hem, what seeken ye him that lyueth with deede men? He is not here; but he is risun: haue ye minde³ how he spak to you whanne he was yit in Golilee, and seide, for it bihoueth

¹ The O. T. was from the pen of Nic. of Hereford, as far as Baruch (III, 20), the rest was added by Purvey in his revision.

¹ Week, Germ. *Woche*. ² Arranged. ³ Do you remember.

mannes sone to be bitakun into the hondis of synful men: and to be crucifyed: and the thridde day to rise agen? And thei bithoughten on hisse wordis, and thei geden⁴ agen fro the graue: and teelden⁵ alle these thingis to the elevene and to alle othere. And there was Marye Maudeleyn and Jone and Marye of James, and othere wymmen that weren with hem, that seiden to Apostlis these thingis.

§ 19.

JOHN MANDEVILLE*, † 1382.

John Mandeville is one of the earliest known writers of English prose. Born about 1300 and educated for the medical profession, he soon followed an irresistible desire for travelling. He went to Asia-Minor, where he enlisted in a Mahometan army in Palestine, and in succession visited Persia, India, China, sojourning for three years at Peking. Then he went to Egypt fighting for the Sultan and refusing the hand of his daughter and a province for the sake of his Christian faith (!), and thence to Lybia, thus roving over the known regions of the world. After an absence of 34 years, he returned to his country and wrote a narrative of his travels in Latin, a compilation in which true facts are mingled with most marvellous stories of wild adventures, monsters, giants, and demons, all told with great seriousness, as e. g. the story of a bird in the island of Madagascar, that carried an elephant in his talons. The Pope, however, confirmed his descriptions to be true. Mandeville, afterwards, translated his book into French. A later translation of this curious work into English (1378), "*The Voyage and Travail of Sir John Maundeville*", by an unknown author was not only the most popular in its time, but still remains a remarkable specimen of the English speech in its infancy.

In his later years, the author again left his native country and died abroad.

From Sir John de Mandeville.

And yee schulle undirstond that whan men comen to Jerusalem here first pilgrymage is to the chirche of the Holy Sepulcre where oure Lord was buryed, that is withoute the cytee on the north syde. But it is now enclosed inwith the toun walle. And there is a fulle fayr chirche alle rownd, and open above, and covered with leed. And on the west syde is a fair tour and an highe for belles strongly made. And in the myddes of the chirche is a tabernacle as it wer a lytyle hows, made with a low litylle dore; and that tabernacle is made in manere of half a compas

* Went. * Told.

right curiously, and richely made of gold and azure and other riche coloures, fulle nobelyche made. And in the righte syde of that tabernacle is the sepulcre of oure Lord. And the tabernacle is VIIJ fote long, and V fote wyde, and XJ fote in heighth. And it is not longe sithen the sepulcre was all open, that men myghte kisse it and touche it. But for pilgrymes that comen thidre peynd hem¹ to breke the ston in peces, or in poudre; therfore the Soudan hath do make² a walle aboute the sepulcre that no man may towche it.

CHAPTER V.

§ 20.

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION AND THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING 1450—1560.*

Henry VI. 1422—1461.

Edward IV. 1461—1483.

Edward V. 1483—1483.

Richard III. 1483—1485.

Henry VII. 1485—1509.

Henry VIII. 1509—1547.

Edward VI. 1547—1553.

Mary I. 1553—1558.

This era produced great changes in the political, religious, and intellectual conditions of the English nation, which during this period passed from the Middle ages to the modern times.

The bloody wars of the “Two Roses” (1455—1485) had “blighted all intellectual growth”, and under the bloodstained scepter of Henry VIII., English feudalism had changed into unlimited monarchy. Causes of a political nature, which served at the same time to generate and to promote a greater intellectual activity, produced the so-called “Protestant Reformation” which had been already prepared by John Wyclif and carried on by various staunch reformers under the protection of the crafty, arbitrary, and faithless Henry VIII., whose motives and aims were but of a selfish character. The ensuing dismemberment of the English Church from the Roman see not only consolidated the power of the English monarch at home, but also raised his authority abroad. However, this great movement, arising more from political and egotistic motives than religious wants and conditions, was but of a superficial and outward nature, and not so radical and decisive as the Reformation in other Protestant countries; whence the Anglican Church is still, at times, pervaded by Roman Catholic tendencies, engendering a lamentable acrimonious spirit between the High-

¹ Exerted themselves; French *peiner*. ² Cf. p. 33 n. 15.

and the Low-Church so hurtful to true religious life and sentiment. It may also be considered as one of the main springs of the sad dismemberment of a great part of the English people into numerous sects of dissenters. However, the polemic and religious writings of the reformers, along with the various translations of the Bible, did not fail to enlighten the lowest ranks of society and to awaken a taste for intellectual occupations.

The brilliant age of Chaucer had been followed by a century of great barrenness; and although his bright example had found a number of imitators, no worthy successor of him, either in prose or poetry, can be found among them. Nor was it a time of erudition or original invention, but an age of artificial cultivation and perfection of the literary, particularly of the poetical language, and of active preparations for the brilliant era near at hand.

The most powerful agent in this direction was doubtless the invention of the **Art of Printing** on the continent, introduced into England by William Caxton about the year 1474.

Caxton*, a merchant of London, went abroad, where he became acquainted with the new art and adopted it as a profession, becoming himself an active author and translator. During twenty years, he published about 64 works, particularly of the old English poets, which gained great popularity. The work which is considered to have been the first issued from his press at Westminster, was "*The Game and Playe of the Chesse, translated out of the French and fynyshid the last day of Marche 1474.*" Thus he contributed in no little degree to the regular literary framing of the language and to the creation of a good prose style. The number of books being increased and their price reduced to about one fifth of their former value, the circle of readers became widened, and learning and general culture spread among the lower classes of the people.

To this end the **Study of Greek**, which till then had been entirely neglected in England, was of a very high importance. William Grocyn, an Oxford scholar, who had studied this language in Rome and Florence with learned fugitives from Constantinople (1453), taught it to the students of Oxford. He, therefore, has not undeservedly been called the "Patriarch of English learning". Cambridge next became the seat of Hellenic studies. Like attention and zeal were bestowed on those of Latin and Latin classics, and several valuable books were written in this language.

Numerous translations were made from both languages, and thus two new channels opened, through which learning, arts, and poetry were to receive fresh aliments from abundant sources.

Of a propitious influence was also the increased **Inter-course with the Continent**. Whilst English scholars went to Italy to draw from new-found sources, learned men from the Continent even visited England, among whom the eminent Dutch scholar Erasmus (1497), who pronounced English learning to be inferior only to that of Italy.

Translations from the French were continued. Lord Berners translated the chronicle of Froissart, which became a landmark of English prose.

Another vivifying source, particularly for poetry, was the older **Poetry of Italy**, "which thenceforward became one of the chief fountain-heads of inspiration to that of England throughout the whole space of time over which is shed the golden light of the names of Spenser, of Shakespeare, and of Milton". Its chief cultivators were Surrey and Wyatt [v. § 21], who opened the "School of Amourists", transplanting Petrarchian sentimentalism together with his favourite metrical form, the Sonnet, into English literature.

Of great service and importance was the **Foundation of many Schools and Colleges**. Twenty new schools were founded between the year 1500 and the Reformation, as St. Paul's School in London, the first in which Greek was taught in England, Eton, King's College at Cambridge, and the Universities of St. Andrew's, Glasgow, and Aberdeen in Scotland.

The English language continued its process of perfection, being employed in all public proceedings and documents, in popular and partly in controversial writings, in the pulpit and the chair, and sustaining many changes and modifications by which its literary capacities were gradually developed and brought to a final state of maturity. It is, however, not till after the commencement of the 16th century, that the rise of the classical prose literature can be dated, the political state of the country not being at all favourable to literary and scientific pursuits. The poetical products are less remarkable for their intrinsic value, than for the new materials and forms which they furnished for the coming time.

§ 21.
POETICAL LITERATURE.

John Skelton* († 1529), the tutor of Henry VIII., struck out a new, though not a very high path in poetry, that of satire, which, stimulated by the reformatory spirit of the time, he levelled in the most unmerciful manner at the clergy in his poem *Collin Clout*, and at the powerful and magnificent minister Wolsey in another: *Why come ye not to Court?* His poems are composed in a peculiar short doggrel measure of frequently repeated rhymes and remarkable for their boldness, vivacity, and humour. He treats the language with great ease and freedom, making use of all that is coarse, quaint, and familiar in the so-called slang of the common people. He also composed poems of a more genteel character, as *The Booke of Phyllip Sparrowe*, an elegy on a sparrow belonging to a fair nun; it is unrivalled for elegance, humour, and playfulness. Skelton, besides, was a man of great learning; Erasmus calls him "the glory and the light of English learning". He also occupied the post of a poet-laureate.

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey* (1516—1547), was not only a gallant courtier and brave soldier, but the first English writer who deserves the name of a classical poet. Brought up in the midst of luxury and fondled at a splendid court, he became one of the most accomplished noblemen of his time. His poems, chiefly Sonnets, are addressed to a young Lady Geraldine (Elizabeth Fitz-Gerald). As a poet, Surrey's merits are of a double nature. Imbued with the spirit of Italian poetry through his friend and master Wyatt, he not only imparted to English poetry a greater refinement of taste and a more perfect regularity of rhythm, but also introduced some new forms of versification, the *Sonnet* and the *Blank-verse*, which latter he employed in his chief work, a translation of the *Second and the Fourth Book of the Aeneid*, and which metre ever afterwards was used in the loftiest regions of poetry, the epic and the drama.

This noble and refined poet was executed on a frivolous charge of treason in his 31st year, the last victim of the sanguinary tyrant, Henry VIII., who died eight days after him.

Description of Spring.

[Wherein each thing renewes, save only the lover.]
 The soote season, that bud and bloom forth brings,
 With green haſh clad the hill, and eke the vale.
 The nightingale with feathers new ſhe sings;
 The turtle to her make¹ hath told her tale.

Summer is come, for every spray now springs,
 The hart hath hung his old head on the pale;
 The buck in brake his winter coat he slings;
 The fishes flete with new repaired scale:
 The adder all her slough away she slings;
 The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale;
 The busy bee her honey now she mings¹;
 Winter is worn that was the flowers bale.²
 And thus I see among these pleasant things
 Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs!

Sir Thomas Wyatt* (1503—1542), the intimate friend and literary associate of the former, was equally distinguished for his accomplishments, his elegant scholarship and ready wit. Manifesting a great inclination for Italian poetry, he went with the English ambassador on a journey to Italy (1527), where he familiarized himself with the sonnets of Petrarch whom he strove to equal. On his return he published a joint-edition of *Songs and Sonnettes** with his young friend Surrey, through which they founded the new poetical "School of Amourists". The poetic vein of Wyatt possessed a greater vigour and diversity, especially suited for satire and epigram.

Thomas Sackville or Lord Buckhurst (1536—1608), High-Treasurer of England, must be included in this period, although in spirit and manner he resembled more the writers of the Elizabethan time. He may not unfitly be called the herald of the coming splendour. His *Mirror of Magistrates** (1559), the joint-work of seven poets, which was to contain a collection of tragic examples of the vicissitudes of fortune, intended for lessons to future kings and statesmen, is an imitation of Boccaccio. He only composed the "*Induction*" (introduction), a grand allegory "within the porch and jaws of hell", in imitation of Dante, and the first poem, which is also the finest: *The Complaint of the Duke of Buckingham*. The work was continued by others in an inferior way, yet left unfinished. It is written in stanzas of seven lines, exhibiting great power of expression; the general tone is gloomy and monotonous. Sackville, in company with Thomas Norton, wrote the first English tragedy, *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex* [v. § 29, p. 57], founded on ancient British history, in which the blank-verse was for the first time used in the English drama.

¹ mate. ² mingles. ³ destruction.

§ 22.

SCOTCH POETS.

William Dunbar* († about 1520), called the “Chaucer of the North”, occupies the first rank. In the garb of a Franciscan Friar, he travelled through England and France, preaching and begging, then visiting the English and some continental courts as an attaché to certain Scottish embassies, and finally laid down his experiences and his knowledge of human nature in his allegorical poems, creations of a truly powerful and original genius. His chief poems are *The Thistle and the Rose*, commemorating the marriage of James IV. with the Princess Margaret of England (1503); *The Daunce of the Seven Deadly Sins*, a wild conception describing a vision, in which each sin is represented by a distinct and striking personification and painted “in horror’s darkest hues”; and *The Golden Terge¹*, an allegory of love, beauty, reason, and poetry. He also composed ballads of a keen, satiric character.

Gavain Douglas* († 1522), a voluminous and miscellaneous writer, and the first who translated a Latin author, *Virgil's Aeneid*, into the English tongue, introducing each book by a metrical prologue. An original work of his is *The Palace of Honour*, composed in the spirit and style of Chaucer.

Sir David Lindsay*, a satirist and the most popular of Scotch poets, is said to have contributed towards the Reformation in Scotland. His poem, *The Dreme* (1528), is conceived in Chaucer's manner; the satires on *The Three Estates* and *The Monarchie* (1553) are strong attacks upon the ignorance, profligacy, and avarice of the clergy.

§ 23.

THE BALLAD.*

This epoch is still remarkable for giving origin to a new species of popular poetry, *The Ballad*, which in the course of the 15th and 16th centuries took the place of the old metrical romances. Particularly fertile in this respect was the second half of the 15th century. The native home of the ballad is the so-called “Border Country”, which through continual warfare between the hostile neighbouring nations, the English and the Scots, represented the scene of many wild and romantic events and adventures, which, like the rhapsodies of the old Ionian bards, were sung by wandering, illiterate minstrels. No country, except Spain, is comparable to Britain in the wealth of these

¹ Shield, Germ. *Tartsche*.

original songs. They are characterised by simple pathos and heroism, fiery sentiment and picturesqueness, and couched in the iambic measure of twelve or fourteen syllables, united into couplets of four lines rhyming by pairs. The Scotch ballads seem to possess more spirited energy than the others. The oldest ballads preserved are *The Battle of Otterburne** (1388) "the grand old ballad", celebrating a battle in which a Douglas lost his life against a Percy, surnamed "Hotspur"; *Chevy Chase*, most probably founded upon the same battle, according to others only treating a fictitious event; *The Death of Douglas* and *The Nut-Brown-Maid* (about 1500—1502), *Edward, Sweet William's Ghost, Sir Patrick Spense* (Alexander III. of Scotland).

There also grew up cycles of ballads, grouped around one celebrated, popular hero or person, like that of the famous outlaw Robin Hood* († 1247) and his "merry men", very likely identical with the Earl of Huntingdon; another famous personage was Randolph, Earl of Chester.

The first considerable collection with valuable notes was published by Thomas Percy in 1765 (v. § 62).

PROSE LITERATURE.

§ 24.

SIR THOMAS MORE*, 1480—1535.

This great statesman and scholar and earliest of classic prose-writers was born 1480 in London. In his fifteenth year, he became page to the Archbishop of Canterbury, where he showed so much talent and wit, that great things were prophesied of him. He then studied law at Oxford and Greek under Grocyn (v. § 20), and became a zealous scholar and ardent defender of it against the attacks of its adversaries, the so-called "Trojans" in opposition to its votaries, the "Greeks". There he also concluded an intimate and lasting friendship with the learned Dutchman Erasmus, and wrote his first English poems of considerable beauty, "snowdrops of English literature, flowerets of a day, hovering between winter and spring". Then followed his rapid rise. He gradually became lawyer and under-sheriff of London. Under Henry VIII. he rose in favour and fortune. He was made Privy-Councillor, Treasurer of the Exchequer, and in 1523 Speaker of the Commons. After the fall of Wolsey, his rival, he succeeded to his place as Lord Chancellor, which high office he held for two years. King Henry, being intent

on marrying Anne Boleyn, expected his Chancellor to decide his pending case of divorce in his favour. More, however, laid down the seals of his office and retired into private life. Refusing to acknowledge the legitimacy of the King's marriage, he was cast into the Tower, where he lay for a year. Then impeached on a charge of opposing the royal will, and refusing to acknowledge Henry the head of the Church, he was found guilty and executed in 1535.

The literary merits Sir Th. More acquired as an English writer rest upon his *Life and Reign of Edward V. and the Usurpation of Richard III.*, written in an easy flow of language. It is the first work deserving the name of a history, and the first specimen of classical English prose. His collection of letters, written from prison to his wife and daughter, are the first instances of an epistolary style. His language is pure, natural, and perspicuous.

More's literary fame, however, is more connected with his Latin work *Utopia*, a philosophical romance, abounding in strokes of humour, and representing an ideal republic, whose laws, customs, and institutions are of such excellence, as to originate the highest degree of human happiness and perfection. He probably took the idea from Plato's 'Atlantis'.

§ 25.

ROGER ASCHAM*, 1515—1568.

Roger Ascham, the tutor and favourite of Queen Elizabeth, was a native of Yorkshire and of a humble origin. He enjoyed a good education, and through the kindness of a nobleman, the benefit of classic studies at the University of Cambridge. As he made great progress, especially in the Greek language, he was appointed Public Orator of the University, but showing considerable talents as a teacher, he was made tutor of the classic languages to Princess Elizabeth. After two years, he became Secretary to the English ambassador at the imperial court of Germany, where he remained three years, publishing his observations and experiences in his "*Report on the State of Germany*". On his return, he was appointed Latin Secretary to King Edward VI., and although an ardent Protestant, kept his office under Queen Mary, and spent his last ten years of a smooth and quiet life at the court and in the company of his royal pupil Elizabeth.

His two greatest works are *Toxophilus*, a treatise on archery, now without value, and his more celebrated *Schoolmaster** (1570), the first important work on education, comprising two parts: "*The Bringing up of Youth*", and "*The Ready Way to the Latin Tongue*".

Of great interest are his remarks on the capacity of the English language for poetry: He condemns rhyme as barbarous, foretells the miscarrying of the attempt to naturalize the classic hexameter, a prophesy which has been precisely fulfilled, and recommends the use of the "blank-verse", recently introduced from Italy by Lord Surrey. He already declaimed against the use of foreign words.

Ascham's minor Latin works are of little importance.

§ 26.

ECCLESIASTICAL LITERATURE.

The ecclesiastical literature, being mainly formed of translations of the Bible and polemical writings, had a great influence on the development of the language. These helped largely to purify and strengthen it by bringing out the native resources of the English tongue and preventing the influence of Greek and Latin scholarship from becoming too powerful.

The most meritorious literary achievement of the time was William Tyndale's* *Translation of the New Testament*; for being of uncommon purity and elaboration, it mainly contributed to fix and spread the English literary language. Tyndale, therefore, may not unfairly be called "the English Luther". Wyclif's translation having become obsolete, Tyndale, therefore, an ardent adherent of the new doctrines of the continental reformers, determined to effect a new one.

Forced to leave England in consequence of his religious views, he went to Germany, conversed with Luther, and completed his translation, which was printed at Wittenberg in 1526, and introduced into England by hundreds, in spite of the threats and penalties inflicted on the transgressors. Even Sir Thomas More wrote in bitter language against it. In 1534 appeared a revised edition. Tyndale also translated portions of the Old Testament and composed many English tracts on religious matters, intended for sale in England. Being betrayed into the hands of the German Emperor, he was imprisoned for eighteen months, tried, sentenced for heresy, and strangled at the stake.

in Brussels in 1536. His last words were: "O Lord, open the King of England's eyes!"

In this very year, his New Testament was reprinted in England, the first translation of the Bible issued from an English press. Through the King's breach with the Roman see, the reading of the Bible was opened to the laity. Tyndale's translation was revised and completed by Coverdale* and Rogers (the first Protestant burnt by Queen Mary), who added the *Old Testament* and published the *Complete Translation* in 1537 with a dedication to the King and Queen. It was again revised and edited by Cranmer (1540) and became known as "*The Great Bible*", also called "*Cranmer's Bible*", which soon spread throughout the kingdom, and even penetrated into Scotland and Ireland, and later, with the Puritans, to America. Tyndale's translation served as the proper foundation to the famous "*Authorised Version*", completed in 1611 by order of James I.¹ Eighty millions of people now speak the English of Tyndale's Bible.

Among the *English Reformers*, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, ranks first; the English nation owes to him many important works, as *The Book of Common Prayer** (1549—52), in the main a translation of the old Latin mass-book, a collection of *Sermons*, and the above-mentioned *Cranmer's Bible*.

Cranmer's fellow-labourers were the bishops Ridley and Latimer. The former, a most dexterous disputant and famous preacher, is more celebrated for his learning, whilst the latter was distinguished for his sermons and letters, which are characterized by a sense of homeliness, idiomatic simplicity, deep piety, constant cheerfulness, and an absence of learning and refinement of language.

Both suffered the same fate, death at the stake under Queen Mary.

John Foxe*, the memorialist of the Reformers, composed a work: *Acts and Monuments of the Church*, which is generally known as "*Foxe's Book of Martyrs*" (1563); and John Knox, the great reformer of Scotland, a *History of Scottish Reformation*.

¹ A new revised translation of the New Testament appeared in the autumn of 1880.

CHAPTER VI.

§ 27.

ELIZABETHAN ERA 1580—1625.*

The so-called Elizabethan Era, with regard to belles lettres, is generally dated from the publication of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* (1580), which marks the commencement of modern or rather national English literature. Though scarcely comprising half a century, it is one of the most brilliant period of universal literature, and may be placed side by side with the age of Pericles, Augustus, Leo X., and Louis XIV. for its immense fertility and originality of thought, imagination, and eloquence. In it, the English literature may be said to have passed from its state of infancy to that of ripest manhood, and, aided by many favourable circumstances, it rose to the first rank of all modern literatures of which it took the lead.

In the first place, the influence of the reformatory spirit was extremely powerful towards the production of greater spiritual freedom. With the accession of Queen Elizabeth, whose first act was to order the liturgy to be read in English, the Episcopal or Anglican Church had been firmly re-established. Its political and aristocratical character, however, favouring monarchical absolutism, gave rise to an opposite striving towards greater ecclesiastic independency and a thorough purification of religion from all human doctrines, thus engendering that austere sect of Puritans, so baneful for a time to the development of general culture, and in its consequences still felt to the present day.

The increase of constitutional authority, the creation of good laws, and the improvement of the internal administration, widened the compass of social rights and liberties, and favoured the rising of a new class of denizens, that of the middle-classes, the chief representatives and supporters of modern society and civilisation.

The old romantic and chivalrous spirit was turned to more practical purposes in the discovery and occupation of remote countries. The English fleet was mightily developed. Whilst Henry VIII. possessed but one single man-of-war, Elizabeth sent 150 against the Spanish Armada (1588). The globe was

circumnavigated; Sir Walter Raleigh [v. § 38] discovered the West-Indies; Francis Drake (1577—1581) undertook his great voyages; Colonies were founded in North America. In 1553 an Anglo-Russian Company had already been established; in 1600 the Great East-India Company was chartered¹ and franchised². Through this spirit of activity and enterprise, the English nation acquired that great wealth which in its turn became the source of manifold comforts and refinements.

In literature, the flower of all poetry, the drama, was carried to its highest degree of perfection by the great master Shakespeare; lyric, narrative, and descriptive poetry found able writers, and the popular ballad was more cultivated than ever before or after. Numerous translations and imitations of the classics furnished rich materials and examples, and the spoils of mediaeval literature were brought to light and adapted to modern tastes and views; even the Bible was made to contribute its narrative treasures to poetic purposes. Tales of travel and descriptions of foreign climes and nations opened new prospects and created new interests.

Greek and Latin learning became universal; the classics were familiarized even to the female sex, and the whole literature and social life became tinctured with ancient history and mythology which degenerated into classic pedantry and favoured that taste for allegory which found its chief cultivator in Edmund Spenser, and left its traces throughout the whole course of modern literature.

Art, literature, and learning also received mighty impulses from the great geniuses of Italy³ and Germany.⁴ Translations of Italian tales gave rise to innumerable plays and poems originating new tastes and subjects, which took the place of the old legends and chronicles, void of interest and reality. The illustrious example of Elizabeth, who filled her court with learned men and who herself possessed considerable learning and a taste for music and poetry, was of no little influence towards a general diffusion of culture and the refinements of arts and literature, though not without spreading, at the same time, that

¹ Privileged by a charter.

² Endowed with franchises.

³ Leonardo da Vinci, Michel Angelo Buonarotti, Raphael, Titian, Corregio, Palaestrina, Ariosto, Galilei, Giordano Bruno etc.

⁴ Dürer, Kopernicus, Kepler etc.

looseness of morals of which her own court gave the pernicious example.

The great festivals, masques, tournaments, and spectacles, which attracted and dazzled the people, the glorious defeat of the "Invincible Armada" in 1588, the support which Elizabeth sent to the Protestants in France and the Netherlands, and the ideal stamp of the time, spread a shining lustre over the whole reign; and the flourishing state of agriculture, commerce, and manufacture contributed not only to the promotion of all works of intellect, but also to create that cheerfulness and national pride, which has given to this time the characteristic name of "Merry Old England", celebrated ever after as "the Golden Age of Queen Bess".

POETICAL LITERATURE.

§ 28.

EDMUND SPENSER 1552—1599.*

Little is known of the earliest years of this poet, the greatest of this period after Shakespeare. He is said to have been of noble origin. In his sixteenth year, he studied at Pembroke College, Cambridge, as a sizar¹, where in 1576 he also took his degree of Master of Arts (M. A.). Four years later, in 1580, he published his "*Shepheardes Calendar*", which made him the most prominent of English poets and marks a new epoch in the history of English literature. He dedicated it to Sir Philip Sidney, who introduced the young poet to his uncle, the powerful Lord Leicester. Thus having gained the favour and patronage of the great, he was received at the court of Queen Elizabeth, who in 1580 appointed him secretary to Lord Grey of Wilton, the newly created Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. In 1586 he received from the Queen the grant of Kilcolman castle with 5000 acres of land for cultivation. There he took up his residence during the following twelve years, cultivating the friendship of his new friend Walter Raleigh (v. § 38) and composing his great poem, *The Faery Queene* (1596). When

¹ The "sizar" was an inferior sort of a student, outwardly marked by a different dress (a coarse, sleeveless gown and a red cap) and subjected to menial services in return for free board and tuition.

in 1598 a great rising, called "Tyrone's Insurrection", took place, Kilcolman was sacked by the insurgents. Spenser and his family escaped only with difficulty, leaving an infant child perishing in the flames. Utterly poor and neglected, the great poet died three months afterwards at a London inn and was buried in the poets' corner of Westminster Abbey, near Chaucer.

The Shepherds' Calendar is a collection of twelve eclogues or pastoral songs, one for each month of the year, depicting the pastimes, loves, and disappointments of shepherds, and criticizing also the abuses of the Church and clergy; the fourth is a panegyric on Queen Elizabeth.

*The Faery Queene**, an allegoric epic poem, was to contain twelve books, "fashioning XII morall vertues", fighting against the opposite sins or vices. Only six, however, are finished.¹ Its hero is the mythical Prince Arthur, the summary of all virtues, who in a vision falls in love with Gloriana the Queen of Faery Land. Accompanied by the enchanter Merlin, he sets out to seek her, who is just celebrating her annual festival lasting twelve days, during which twelve adventures are achieved by twelve knights, typifying the triumphs of twelve virtues, viz., Holiness, Temperance, Chastity, Friendship, Justice, and Courtesy, of which the first, represented by the Red-Cross Knight, is the finest in poetical merit. The others fall off gradually in consequence of the poet's attempting too great a task by interweaving his exquisite pictures of chivalrous life with bright allegories of the history of his own time. Thus Gloriana does not only mean "Glory" in general, but "the most excellent and glorious person of our soveraine the Queene", who also is intended by the beautiful huntress Belpheobe. The Red-Cross Knight not only represents "Holiness", but likewise the Anglican Church; Prince Arthur stands for Leicester and sometimes for Sidney. Error is intended for Rome and poor Mary Stuart. Spenser's flattery for Queen Elizabeth knows no bounds: her red hair becomes "yellow locks, crised like golden wire".

The fundamental idea of the poem is the glorification of a pure life in Church, State, and Family, or the strife of the

¹ The current story of the remaining six having been lost either by him or by a careless servant loses all ground, when we consider the short interval between the publication of the second three books in 1596 and his death.

human heart against all evil opposing itself against our union with God. It represents the romantic chivalrous spirit of Elizabeth's time and is the first ideal poetic work of English literature, exercising a great influence on the future English poetry.

This great allegory is not without great defects, including a want of unity and interest, a monotony of characters, and a tiresomeness, proceeding from its double symbolic nature, the spiritual and historical. Although but half finished, it is twice as long as Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Spenser's language, though antiquated — past participles with the prefix 'y' are frequently recurring — and in general affected and bombastical, is melodious, sweet, and flowing. He excels in richness of description, in fertility of imagination, and in power of depicting with vividness both scenes and characters. He has enriched poetry with a new metrical form, called after him the "*Spenserian stanza*", shaped upon the Italian "*ottava rima*", to which a ninth, the so-called "long-line" or "*Alexandrine*", is added. It has been since employed by Thompson, Campbell, and Byron.

Spenser also wrote 88 *Sonnets* and other considerable poems, issued under the common title of *Complaints*. His splendid *Epithalamium* or *Wedding-Song*, which he wrote on the occasion of his own wedding, is a highly musical poem, inspired by true natural feeling and enthusiasm.

Spenser was also able to write a good prose style; we possess but one prose work, *View of the State of Ireland*, in the form of a dialogue.

Sir Philip Sidney* (1554—1586), the illustrious and accomplished knight, exerted a great influence on the intellectual condition of the period. He united in his person all the high qualities: nobility of birth, beauty of person, bravery, generosity, learning, and courtesy. Loved by the Court and the people, he was also the liberal patron of arts and letters. Being mortally wounded at the battle of Zutphen (1586) in the Netherlands, he died, only 32 years old, declining the refreshing draught, presented to him, in favour of a dying soldier.

His *Arcadia* (1580) is a romantic fiction in which pastoral scenes are mixed with romantic adventures. The work, though skilfully related and abundant in poetic thoughts, is nevertheless tiresome and frequently marred by traces of Spanish affectation and conceits. It gave rise to a host of novel writers who

succeeded in supplanting the French romances. Sidney's reputation as a classic writer chiefly rests upon a little treatise, *Defense of Poesie* (1581), in which he extols poetry as a powerful means of acquiring learning and virtue. The work was mainly directed against the Puritans, who condemned anything cheerful, pleasant, and beautiful. Sidney also wrote a small collection of *Sonnets*, distinguished for refined elegance.

§ 29.

RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH DRAMA.*

The rise of the national English drama is to be dated from the middle of the 16th century. Its earliest beginnings, however, must be traced back to the 12th century, when a sort of rude dramatic representations were acted, which from their sacred nature were called *Mysteries* or *Miracle Plays*. The oldest on record, *The Play of St. Catharine* by Geoffrey, Abbot of St. Albans, is of the year 1110. They were introduced from France and performed in the French and Latin languages, in English only since the beginning of the 14th century. The clergy not only composed, but also represented these plays, in order to convey religious instruction to the laity, and to extend and strengthen their power and influence over them. Pardons even were granted to the spectators, as e. g. at Chester under Henry IV. The subjects of these plays were chiefly taken from the most striking parts of the Bible: The Creation, the Fall of Man, Cain and Abel, the Deluge, Abraham's Trial, the Crucifixion or the Passion of our Lord, the Massacre of the Innocents etc., or from the lives of saints and martyrs. They were composed in rhymed verses of four accents or risings, yet in a raw and irregular style; time and place were entirely disregarded. High religious festivals, the anniversaries of saints, or important events, were generally the occasions on which they were performed. The temporary stage was erected in churches, convents or abbeys, and even in churchyards. It was a rude wooden scaffold, consisting of three platforms, upwards representing Hell, Earth, and Heaven, on which the respective personages acted their parts, not without a good deal of noise, coarse language, calling of bad names, and dealing of hard blows.¹ These representations were not unfrequently of grave

¹ So Noah's stubborn wife is beaten into the Ark.

and solemn pathos intermingled with numerous absurdities and anachronisms.² No possible expedient was spared, either to terrify the audience,³ or to make them roar with laughter. Even in the deep tragedies, the comic element was of great necessity to enliven grave or lengthy scenes. The representation of the Creation and the Fall of Man lasted six days. Wicked personages, placed in ludicrous situations, and above all the „Prince of Darkness”, had to act the parts of clowns or jesters, constantly beating or being beaten.

We possess several collections of *Miracle Plays*:

*The Coventry Plays** (containing 42 plays);
*The Towneley Mysteries** (32 plays);
*The Chester Plays** (25 plays);
*The York Plays** (42 plays) and
*The Digby Plays**

so called either by the names of places or families where they have been found.

These *Mysteries* enjoyed their popularity until the end of the 14th century, when the religious character of the time acquired more of a worldly spirit. When learning was no longer the monopoly of the ecclesiastics and civilisation spread among the laity, an hostility against Roman Catholicism was gradually arising and increasing in strength. A new form of dramatical plays, the *Moralities* or *Morals*, were substituted for the *Miracles* and gradually supplanted them since the 15th century. Their subjects, no more purely religious, but moral, embodied abstract qualities in allegorical personages, so e. g. “Every-Man”, the general type of humanity, “Lusty Juventus”, the representative of the follies and weaknesses of youth; “Justice”, “Mercy”, “Gluttony”, “Pride” etc. From the churches and convents, they were transferred to the market-places, where an open scaffold was erected, sometimes only a platform moving on wheels. Nor were the performers any longer priests and monks, but students and schoolboys or brethren of various trade-guilds or trading companies; so in Chester on every Whitsuntide, from the year 1268 for three centuries. The “Devil” of the *Miracles* changed for the

² Carthaginian senators appear with watches.

³ In the Passion of Our Lord, a condemned criminal was in reality crucified on the stage.

"Vice" of the Morals, sometimes even both were represented for the sake of ludicrous and boisterous scenes of fight between the two. The action of this new sort of plays was exceedingly simple, and in consequence of its symbolical and allegorical nature of less interest than that of the Mysteries. Both tragedy and comedy have sprung from the same root. Some of these morals have been preserved: "*Hit the Nail on the Head*"; "*The Hog has lost his Pearl*"; „*The Cradle of Security*”. A very fertile writer in this department was Bishop Bale (1495—1563).

An inferior sort of plays were the *Interludes* (French "*Entremets*"), short compositions in dialogue of a merry and farcical character, which, as their name implies, were represented in the "entr'actes". Having sprung from the controversies between Catholics and Protestants, they were of a polemical spirit, often represented characters of real life, and treated events of the day in a sarcastic manner. They may be regarded as the beginnings of the English Comedy. Their inventor and great cultivator was John Heywood* († 1565), who lived at the court of Henry VIII. The most popular of his Interludes was: *The four P.'s*. (A Pardner, a Poticary, a Palmer, and a Pedlar have betted who should be able to tell the greatest lie. The prize is awarded to the Palmer who pretends never to have seen a woman growing impatient).

Of a like secondary importance were the *Dumb-Shows*, a sort of "tableaux vivants", which were acted by way of introduction to each act. They are the origin of the modern *Pantomimes*.

The *Masques*, dialogues put into the mouths of a few allegorical characters, enjoyed great popularity and long cultivation. They were acted at the pageants of the great.

In the progress of scenic representations, the religious character had gradually given way to the introduction of the profane, and the tediousness of virtues and vices, which excited neither sympathy nor interest, to the admission of real characters, particularly of famous historical personages, the types of some virtue or vice. Historical and allegorical characters were even mixed in the time of transition, as in Bale's *Kynge Johan**, or in Thomas Preston's *The Life of Cambyses, King of Persia* (1561). The former may also be considered as the founder of the English national drama, for having been the first that selected materials from the chronicles for historic plays. Of

greater importance and influence, however, towards the last step to perfection of dramatic plays were the spectacles of the universities, acted in the Latin language. Elizabeth and James, both versed in classic studies, were often entertained with Latin plays, acted by the students of Oxford and Cambridge universities and of the Inns of Court.¹ Numbers of pieces were composed on the models of Terence and Seneca. Real personages supplanted the allegorical ones, „Vice” was metamorphosed into the “Clown”, historic events and occurrences of social life were chosen as subjects, the plays were divided into acts and scenes, the chorus was adopted, and the language couched in the blank verse, „the strange metre”. The eldest of these classic dramas were characterised by a gravity of language, dryness of morality, bloody events, rebellions, treasons, and murders. The earliest known tragedy bears the title of *Ferrex and Porrex* or *Gorboduc*^{*}, composed by Thomas Sackville [v. § 22] and Thomas Norton (1561) and acted in 1562 by the students of the Inner Temple. Its fable belongs to the earliest British history. Next in succession followed *Damon and Pythias* (1564), a mixture of tragedy and comedy by Richard Edwards, and performed before the Queen at Oxford. Up to the year 1580 more than fifty classic dramas started into life, with subjects either from the classic, the mediaeval, or the modern history.

Older in date than the tragedy is the English comedy. It was prominently grotesque, odd, and ludicrous, and composed in a sort of doggrel metre, well suiting its farcical character. The oldest in existence is *Ralph Royster Doyster*^{*} by Nicholas Udall, which was written before the year 1551. It is a dramatic picture of London life. Fourteen years later appeared *Gammer² Gurton's Needle*, ascribed to John Still, bishop of Bath and Wells.

Ferrex and Porrex or *Gorboduc*, an ancient British king, has resolved to divide his kingdom between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex. The Queen who holds that the former, her favourite, ought to become sole heir to the crown, causes a council to be held, which, however, comes to nothing, and the King follows his own way. No sooner does the division take place, than Ferrex, who has been maliciously calumniated, is destroyed by his brother. The infuriate Queen, who has

¹ Colleges for the study of English law. There are four Inns of Court: *The Inner* and the *Middle Temple*, *Lincoln's Inn*, and *Gray's Inn*.

² Gammer, either a contraction of “good-mother”, or a corruption of the French “commère”, of the same meaning.

lost her favourite, kills her second son with her own hand. The people, maddened at the folly of the King and the wickedness of the Queen, slay both sovereigns and rise in open rebellion against the authorities. While the land is thus filled with anarchy and bloodshed, Fergus, Duke of Albany, takes advantage of it, and with a powerful army tries to win the crown for himself. The play ends with a general lamentation at the miserable condition of the country which is left to rebellion.

Ralph Royster Doyster is a vain, swaggering, and cowardly fellow with more money than brains. He has taken a fancy to a widow Custance, who is engaged to Gawin Goodluck, a wealthy gentleman, residing in a different place of the country, and tries to win this lady by sending her a letter and a ring by the hands of his man Merrygreek who is quietly making game of him. Besides, he bribes Dame Custance's maids Mamblecrust, Talkapace, and Alyface to speak pleasantly about him to their mistress. However, Dame Custance is true and despises the conceited fool. Meanwhile Gawin's messenger, Sim, arrives and hearing certain allusions to letters, rings, and marriage-business between her and Ralph, hastens to acquaint his friend of it. The widow, wild with rage, spurns Ralph from her, who breathes vengeance, yet is put to ignominious flight by Custance's women. Gawin Goodluck appears in person, and, after some altercations, is soon reassured, whereupon he invites Ralph to supper, who is made the laughing-stock of the company.

§ 30.

THE OLD ENGLISH OR ELIZABETHAN DRAMA.*

The classical drama, however, was not to become predominant and national in England. Towards the end of the 16th century, the genuine English drama, *romantic in essence* and *irregular in form*, freed itself from the incongenial, classic fetters. Representing true pictures of human life, faithful to realities, in which the serious and the sad are often intermingled with the gay and serene, it disregarded the strict line of demarcation between tragedy and comedy, prescribed by the classic French school: its only object was to excite interest and to awaken reflective pleasure. The lofty and refined were blended with the low and common, and the highest flights of imagination contrasted with gross and vile realities. Some of its defects, coarseness and licentiousness, were but the natural consequences of this circumstance.

As regards the irregularity of form, the three so-called Aristotelian Unities of Time, Place, and Action were likewise neglected, the first often extending over many years, and the second being frequently shifted. Only to the unity of action allowances were made as far as required by the unity of interest. An utmost ingenuity and naturalness in the repre-

sentations of human life, human weaknesses and passions, and an impassionate, energetic, and unaffected language, were among its chief characteristic features. It was the faithful picture of the time, full of powerful contrasts.

This so-called Elizabethan or National Drama extended over a space of time of about sixty years, from the year 1585 till 1642, the year of the closing of the theatres by act of Parliament. Various stages may be observed in its development, strictly coinciding with the different phases of the activity of its greatest representative and leader, William Shakespeare.

The language of the Old English Drama was either prose or verse, according to the marked character of the play: blank verse in tragedies, and prose in comedies.

"The Elizabethan Drama is the most wonderful and majestic outburst of genius that any age has yet seen. It is characterised by marked peculiarities: an intense richness and fertility of imagination, such as was natural in an age when the stores of classical antiquity were suddenly thrown open to the popular mind; and this richness and splendour of fancy are combined with the greatest force and vigour of expression."

§ 31.

THEATRES AND ACTORS.

The first form of the theatre was a travelling or moveable stage. In the year 1576 only, the first licensed standing theatre, "*Blackfriars*", was opened by the company of Lord Leicester. Two more theatres were erected in the same year, "*The Theatre*" and "*The Curtain*". "*The Globe Theatre*", built for Shakespeare and his company in 1599, may be considered as the type of the rest. It was a round wooden building, open to the sky, its stage covered with thatch. The scenery was equally poor and simple: some faded tapestry or grossly painted canvas furnished the whole decoration. The stage was strewn with rushes, like the dwellings of the day. A sort of scaffold or balcony in the back of the stage served for various situations in which an actor spoke from an elevated point. Often during a deep tragedy, the whole stage was hung with black. The change of scenery was indicated by a placard bearing the name of the place. The character of the scenery was often denoted by a typical emblem: a thorn branch signified a leafy forest, a bed was to conjure up the idea of a bed-chamber, a gilded

chair the illusion of a palace. The performances were generally acted on Sundays at one o'clock, meals being then very early. Placards announced the play, a flag, hoisted on the summit of the theatre, floated during the performance, three blasts of the trumpet gave the signal of the beginning. The curtain opened in the middle to both sides. An actor clad in a black velvet coat, recited the prologue, the summary of the play. A jig or merry song concluded the performance. At the end of it, the actors knelt down to pray for the sovereign.

The audience consisted of two classes: the "*groundlings*" or the lower order, who occupied the ground or the pit¹ and paid only one penny, and the "*gallants*", who had to pay six pence for their stools on the stage, where they sat in rows, smoking their clay-pipes, then the height of the fashion, making show of their fineries and splendid clothes, loudly criticizing the play and the actors, whilst the rabble of the pit were swearing, quarrelling, and cardplaying amidst their ale-pots. It was not considered proper for ladies to visit the theatres, but they began to get accustomed to them by assisting in masks. All parts, also the female characters, were represented by men; females were acted by boys or smooth-faced young men in women's dress. Women appeared first as actresses on the stage about the "Restoration", which at first was considered as shocking and monstrous.

The players themselves did not occupy a high position in society; they were but lightly esteemed by the courtiers and nobles under whose patronage they formed distinct companies wearing their liveries and badges, and often wandering about in the country. One held the title of "*Her Majesty's Servants*", still retained to this day. The Puritan municipality of London strongly opposed them, carrying on a continual warfare and ranking them with "*rogues and vagabonds*". In spite of this, there existed at one time twelve theatres in London, for the most part on the southern bank of the Thames, where London jurisdiction did not extend.

The actors, as a rule, had a double character, that of authors and of players. They generally began their career with re-writing and adapting old plays. Dramatic writing was then considered as the lowest branch of literature. Before the year 1600, original plays were paid at the rate of £ 8 to 10, a little

¹ From "*cockpit*", the old places of cock-fighting. The French "*parterre*" is of a similar origin.

later of £ 20 to 25, the author, besides, got the receipts of the second day. The best way to fortune was to become a shareholder in one of the theatres, by which means Shakespeare, Burbage, and Allein acquired considerable wealth, whilst others led a profligate life and died in misery.

§ 32.

EARLY DRAMATIC WRITERS.*

Little of the lives of the predecessors of Shakespeare is known and hardly deserves to be remembered: vice and profligacy were common among them. Nor were their works, with a few exceptions, of any notable importance, if we had not to consider them as the first attempts at a national drama. Many of them were romances in dialogue, full of bloody slaughter. The most important dramatists were Peele, Greene, and Marlowe; in their plays, dramatic action and tragic effect arise from the fatal conflicts of human passions.

Christopher Marlowe* (1563—1593), was the greatest dramatic contemporary of Shakespeare and the first that treated the legend of Dr. Faustus. His life was short and debauched, his end disgraceful. He was possessed of great power and energy of mind, and his language, though not exempt from the declamatory and bombastic, was solemn, passionate, and pathetic. His characters are well drawn, and passion forms the central point of every drama. In his subjects, he showed an inclination for the monstrous. The principal of his tragic plays are *Tamburlaine*, written in the blank verse, which henceforth became fashionable in dramatic poetry, *The Jew of Malta*, *Edward II.**, and above all *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus** (1589), in which all his powers are shown to his greatest advantage, especially in the closing scene, where terror, despair, and remorse are painted in the most effective manner. Marlowe is the creator of the English tragedy, "the morning star that heralded the rising of the great dramatic sun".

Marlowe also composed Lyrical poems, the best of which is *The Passionate Shepherd to his Mistress*.

John Lyly* (1554—1606), wrote a few "court plays" on mythological subjects, full of fantastic unrealities, in that above mentioned peculiar kind of affectation which then was infecting the language of the Court and of literature. Of his seven plays the best are *Endymion* and *Alexander and Campaspe*, which, however, do not rise above mediocrity.

John Lylly, however, is better known as the author of *Euphues* (1590), a long narrative, made up of two parts: *The Anatomy of Wit* and *Euphues and his England*. The first is filled with reflections on love, friendship, education, and religion, the second contains the arrival of *Euphues*, a young Athenian, in London. It is crammed with far-fetched ideas, extravagant descriptions, and over-abundant metaphors, a style which became fashionable in the time of Elizabeth and created a new word, "*Euphuism*", signifying a strained affectation in thought and language after the bad example of the Spaniards.

There may still be mentioned.

George Peele* (1558?—1606), the fellow-actor of Shakespeare, arranged spectacles and shows for town festivals. In his historical plays, as in *Edward I.*, which are more narrative than dramatic, he is the precursor of Shakespeare. One of his best tragedies is *King David and fair Bathsheba*.

Robert Greene* (1560?—1592), a man of a profligate character, disreputable life, and miserable end, was possessed of rare satiric and dramatic powers. From a satirist and pamphleteer he turned to dramatic composition. His plays, with those of Peele, represent the wild, romantic character of the time. They are rude, romantic pictures, full of true life with glaring contrasts, coarse jests, and strange adventures, the features of an unbridled youth.

Thomas Kyd, was probably the author of the famous *Spanish Tragedy*, whose subject has been treated by a great many dramatic writers.

S 33.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE*, 1564—1616.

This greatest of dramatic poets was probably born on the 23rd of April 1564 at Stratford-on-Avon in Warwickshire. His father, John Shakespeare, was probably a wool-dealer and glover of a considerable fortune and of great influence and dignity in his native town; he gradually rose from the post of an Alderman to that of High-Bailiff or Mayor, which rise was later followed by a rapid descent both in wealth and honour. He was even arrested for debt. Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden of Arden, was of noble origin.

Young Shakespeare most likely frequented the Grammar-school of his birth-place, where according to Ben Jonson, he learned "little Latin and less Greek"; later he is said to have tried for some time the profession of a schoolmaster. From the many terms of law, he makes a correct use of in his works, it has not unfairly been inferred that he also spent some time

in a lawyer's office. Already in 1582, at the raw age of eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a neighbouring yeoman, and seven years older than himself. This marriage was by no means a happy one.

The young husband, who was of an unsteady and "jocular" character and a fiery, passionate temper, lived an irregular and unsettled life, and was led into many a wild prank, among which that of deer-stealing in the park of Sir Thomas Lucy at Charlecote, four miles off, is commonly reported as the most warranted. Being severely punished for it, the young poacher revenged himself upon his rural magnate by writing a satiric ballad in doggrel rhyme, which he affixed at his gate. However, fearing the nobleman's wrath, or being pressed by other circumstances, and encouraged by the examples of his countryman Thomas Greene, a famous comic actor, and of Burbage, another Warwickshireman and successful player in London, and feeling perhaps himself a great inclination for this career, he in 1586 or 1587 left his native town and went to London, where his first doings are likewise wrapt in darkness. There exists a silly legend of his holding horses before the London theatres. Very soon, however, he was received as a member in the Lord Chamberlain's company, where he applied himself to the double office of acting and re-arranging and adapting old plays with great industry and success. From this time he remained in constant connection with the theatre for 25 years, viz., from 1586 till 1611, during which time he composed 37 dramas and other poems. His company was the richest and most prosperous. In 1589 he became share-holder in the Blackfriars' Theatre and in 1599 in the Globe, constructed in the same year as a summer-theatre by the same company. Through the results of his activity and a wise parsimony, he rapidly acquired considerable wealth, which he invested in landed and house properties in London and in his native town. His yearly income amounted at a time to £ 400, tantamount to £ 2000 of the present currency.

Shakespeare, though well acquainted with the principles of the dramatic art,¹ does not seem to have been a prominent player. The Ghost in *Hamlet*, and Adam in *As you like it*, were among his favourite parts. The most popular performer of his great tragic characters, Richard III., Hamlet, Othello, King

¹ Vide *Hamlet*, act III sc. II.

Lear etc., was Burbage, his countryman. Though not without adversaries,¹ his disposition is spoken of as "gentle, good-natured, easy and amiable", and a contemporary praises his "uprightness in dealing" and his "civil demeanour".² He enjoyed the patronage of the great, amongst whom were three lords: the Earls of Southampton, Pembroke, and Montgomery, and even the favour of Queen Elizabeth, at whose request he wrote *The Merry Wives of Windsor* to represent Falstaff in love.

In 1611 or 1612 Shakespeare withdrew from active life to live in a happy and quiet retirement with his daughter and son-in-law, Dr. Hall, at New-Place in his native town. This happiness was not to last long, for in 1616, 23rd of April, the anniversary of his birth, and in the 52nd year of his life, he died and his body was laid in the chancel of his parish church, where a flat stone marks his tomb, bearing the awful words:

"Good frend, for Jesus' sake, forbeare,
To digg the dust encloased heare.
Blesse be y^e(¹) man y^e(²) spares thes stones,
And curst be he y^e moves my bones."³

His bust was placed in a niche above his tomb by his son-in-law seven years after his death. In 1741 a monument was erected to him in Westminster Abbey: his figure in full size is leaning against a broken pillar, his arm resting on a book.

§ 34.

THE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE.*

Shakespeare's works comprise 37 dramas, 2 epic or narrative poems, and 154 sonnets. The first are generally divided into *Tragedies*, *Comedies*, and *Historical Plays*. The *Tragedies* are the following seven: *Romeo and Juliet**, *Titus Andronicus*, *Othello**, *King Lear**, *Macbeth**, *Hamlet**, and *Timon of Athens*, of which *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet* are considered as the finest. Shakespeare's tragic idea consists in the conflict between passion and moral necessity, or between nature and spirit, in which struggle the high and the

¹ So Greene, who called him "Shakescene".

² Spenser called him: "Our pleasant Willy", and Ben Jonson: "Sweet Shakespeare" and "My beloved master".

³ Correctly after the inscription on the tomb.

(¹) the. (²) that.

low, the noble and the vile are alike annihilated, not as the victims to an inexorable fate, but to their own free will and character. Thus love is opposed to filial duty in *Romeo and Juliet*, jealousy to conjugal love in *Othello*, hatred and revenge to filial love in *Hamlet*, ambition and avarice to filial love and duty in *King Lear*, ambition to loyalty in *Macbeth*. Shakespeare's tragedies are the most faithful representations of human passions. Besides, a leading idea gives a certain characteristic stamp to each of them: thus *Romeo and Juliet* has not unaptly been called the tragedy of "love", *Othello* of "jealousy", *King Lear* of "compassion", *Macbeth* of "ambition", and *Hamlet* of "irresolution".

*Romeo and Juliet** was Shakespeare's first tragedy, wherefore it is love, the most powerful passion of youth, which produces and hastens the catastrophe. The children of two noble but hostile families in Verona, the Capulet and the Montague, are united by the indissoluble ties of love. A secret marriage consecrates their union. Romeo is banished for having killed his adversary Tybalt in a duel, who had slain his friend Mercutio when walking with him in the street, and Juliet is to be married to another gentleman, to avoid which, she effects apparent death by means of a "distilled liquor", administered to her by a friendly friar, and is buried in the family monument. Romeo, hearing the reports, provides himself with a deadly poison and hastens to her grave in the midst of night, where he meets and kills his rival, Paris, who had come to lay flowers on her tomb. After a touching farewell to his love, he poisons himself at her side. Juliet awakes, and learning the dismal fact, stabs herself and dies on the body of her dead lover. The sorrowful families are reconciled at the tomb of their unhappy children.

*Othello**, a moor and valiant general in the service of the Venetian state, has by the artless tale of his adventures and exploits in foreign countries won the heart of the fair Desdemona, daughter of the Venetian senator Brabantio. He carries her off and marries her against her father's will, to whom, however, he is soon reconciled. At this juncture Othello's services are required against the Turks who are about to attack Cyprus. Othello takes the command and embarks with his wife, whose safe conduct he entrusts to his ancient Jago, a "hellish villain", who hates him for some slight imagined wrong, and revenges himself on him by rousing his jealousy against his innocent lady, which so blinds him that he smothers her in spite of her protestations of faithfulness and innocence. When the horrible deed is done and the error discovered, immediately after, he stabs himself, whilst Jago meets with his deserved punishment.

*King Lear** treats the lamentable story of a weak old king of that name, who has portioned out his kingdom to his two eldest daughters Goneril and Regan, who had deceived his heart with base, hypocritical flatteries, whilst his best and youngest daughter, Cordelia, who scorns to stoop to this degrading practice, is disinherited and banished from his presence. The King of France makes her his queen for her noble bearing, whilst her poor old father, who retains but a hundred knights with whom he is to be maintained by his two daughters in turns, is shamefully

treated by his heartless daughters. At last, he grows mad and, in a wretched condition, strays about with his fool and a faithful knight during a tempestuous night in a wild part of the country. Meanwhile his true daughter Cordelia has come with a French army to avenge her father's wrongs. She finds him, but is taken prisoner with him by the united armies of her sisters who, having conceived a guilty love for one and the same man, die by violent deaths; Goneril poisons Regan from jealousy and kills herself immediately after. But Cordelia, too, falls a victim to a miscreant. She is killed in prison, whereupon old Lear's heart breaks, and he lies down to die beside the body of his dutiful daughter.

*Macbeth**, an ambitious Scotch Thane of royal blood, is incited by the prophecies of three "weird sisters" and the instigations of his wicked wife, to commit foul murder upon King Duncan who, with his two sons Malcolm and Donalbain, had come to honour his palace with his presence. The two princes happily escape, the former to England, the latter to Ireland, and Macbeth becomes king of Scotland. However, other victims must fall to secure his new-won bloody crown. Banquo, another brave general, whose posterity shall, after the prediction of the witches, inherit the crown, is killed by hired assassins, whilst his son Fleance escapes. Macbeth and his Lady lead a miserable life; Lady Macbeth loses her reason and dies by suicide. At a banquet, Banquo's ghost appears repeatedly, shaking his gory locks. Then Macduff, a Scotch nobleman, who stood away from the banquet, incurs Macbeth's suspicion, and, when absent from home to join Malcolm in England, his wife and children are unmercifully slaughtered. Being abandoned by his followers, the tyrant once more consults the witches who warrant his life until Birnam wood shall move against his castle of Dunsinane. This really comes to pass; for Malcolm and Macduff approaching with an army, have ordered their troops to bear branches before them in order to hide their numbers. In the ensuing battle Macbeth is killed by Macduff, and Malcolm becomes king of Scotland.

*Hamlet**, a Danish prince, broods revenge against his uncle, the murderer of his father, who had married the Queen soon after the crime had been committed. His father's ghost appears to him at midnight and urges him to revenge his "foul and most unnatural murder". This preys upon Hamlet's mind and paralyses his energies. However, to fulfil his dreadful task and not to excite suspicion, he feigns madness, and by mistake kills Polonius, the lord chamberlain and father of his Love Ophelia. Then to clear away his last doubts about the murder, he hires a company of players to act the very subject of the crime in the presence of the King and Queen and the whole court. The King, terrified, betrays his guilt and determines to send Hamlet to England with a secret message purporting his death. Ophelia turns mad and is drowned. On his voyage, Hamlet discovers the plot against his life. He is taken prisoner by pirates and landed on the Danish coast, whence he returns to the court just in the moment of Ophelia's funeral. Then the King again with Laertes, son of Polonius, conspires against his life. Through his fell treachery, Hamlet, in a sham-fight, is wounded by Laertes with an envenomed rapier at the very moment when the Queen expires, having inadvertently drunk of a poisoned cup, prepared for Hamlet by the King. Laertes is likewise wounded and feeling death approaching, confesses his guilt and asks Hamlet's forgiveness, who is yet strong enough to stab the King. Then his noble heart breaks.

Timon of Athens. Timon, a wealthy Athenian, has lavished his great wealth with boundless liberty on his friends and flatterers, and when reduced to want, applies to them for assistance, but everywhere finds doors closed against him. Full of indignation, he invites them a last time to a mock festival. The ungrateful and shameless parasites appear again in great numbers, thinking Timon's gold mine reopened. But when, at a given signal, the numerous dishes of the banquet are uncovered, instead of the expected dainties nothing appears but smoke and lukewarm water, fit emblems of their friendship. Timon throws plates and dishes after the base cowards who quickly take to flight. Then he leaves Athens and retires to the forest, where he lives as a hermit cursing all mankind. When, one day, he is digging for roots, now his only food, he chances upon a hidden treasure which he then uses only for the plague and ruin of mankind, in which he succeeds but too well. Spurning prayers, offers, presents, and the urgent invitations of his faithful steward, as well as a deputation of Athenian senators, he prefers his solitude and finally puts an end to his wretched life by committing suicide.

Shakespeare's *Comedies* are sixteen in number: *Twelfth Night, or What you will; As you like it**; *The Comedy of Errors; A Midsummer-Night's Dream**; *The Tempest**; *Love's Labour's Lost; The Two Gentlemen of Verona; All's well that ends well; The Winter's Tale**; *Much Ado about Nothing**; *The Taming of the Shrew**; *The Merchant of Venice**; *Measure for Measure; The Merry Wives of Windsor**; *Cymbeline; Troilus and Cressida*; of which *The Merchant of Venice, As you like it, Twelfth Night, and The Tempest* must be placed in the first rank. Shakespeare's comic element results from a juxtaposition of the irregular and exceptional to established rules and conveniences, from whose contrast or final miscarryings the ludicrous and humorous spring. Representing the realities of life, many of Shakespeare's comedies show a mixture of the tragic and the comic elements, full of contrasts, but true as life itself; his predominating humour is hardly ever free from the earnestness of life. This character is especially imprinted on *The Merchant of Venice, All's well that ends well; Measure for Measure, A Winter's Tale, The Tempest, and Cymbeline*. In these, we pass through trying circumstances and situations, and painful struggles against an inclement fate, which would make us apprehend a tragical issue, if they were not relieved now and then by cheerful incidents, sallies of humour, and above all by a satisfactory and happy conclusion. With Shakespeare the name of comedy belongs to any play with a happy issue.

*The Merchant of Venice** combines two stories ingeniously blended. Antonio, a rich merchant of Venice, whose whole fortune, however, is embarked in commercial enterprises, wishes to assist his friend Bassanio

with money, in order to enable him to sue for the hand of the wealthy, beautiful, and noble-minded lady Portia, residing at Belmont, and is thus compelled to borrow a sum of money from Shylock, a rich Jew, who owes him to a grudge, and who lends it to him only on condition to forfeit a pound of his own flesh, if the money is not returned in three months. The bond is accepted; but through adverse circumstances, Antonio is prevented from keeping the day and is cast into prison. The Jew sticks to "the due and forfeit of his bond", for he hates Antonio, particularly for lending money without taking interest. From this calamity he is rescued by the heroine of the second story. Portia was by her father's will to be married to the man who from three caskets, made of gold, silver, and lead, chooses the one which contains her picture; Bassanio is the happy suitor. Upon hearing the sorry plight of his friend, he instantly returns to Venice, where a trial has been appointed by the Duke. Here Bassanio offers double and treble the sum, but the Jew is stubborn and claims his "pound of flesh". Then Portia, in the disguise of a young lawyer, appears and saves Antonio from the claws of his merciless creditor, who is already wetting his knife, by her sagacious sentence, "a pound of flesh, but not a jot of blood". The Jew's property is confiscated and he himself threatened with capital penalty for having aimed at the life of a Christian. He is pardoned on condition that his lovely daughter Jessica is married to Gratiano. Bassanio's friend, with whom she had eloped, whilst he himself shall become a Christian. At this moment, Antonio's ships have safely arrived in the harbour.

*As You like it** is the most irregular and frolicsome of Shakespeares' plays, a sort of a masque without a well-connected plot. There is first an old duke banished by his brother, who has usurped his throne. He lives with some lords and followers in the Forest of Arden¹, where "they fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world", changing misery into smiling happiness. Then there is Rosalind, his daughter, who had remained at the court with her friend Clelia, the usurper's only daughter. Yet Rosalind is banished, too, lest, by her accomplishments, she should throw his own daughter into the shade. Clelia is unable to bear the separation from her friend, thus they both flee from the court in disguise as brother and sister, accompanied by the Duke's fool. They arrive at the forest of Arden, where they purchase a shepherd's cottage and resolve to stay, until they have found out Rosalind's father. Here they meet with Orlando and Oliver, two sons of the exiled Duke's best friend. Orlando recognizes his former love, fair Rosalind, and Oliver wins the heart of Clelia. The banished Duke is found, and he consents to the double union. At the height of the festival, a messenger arrives with welcome news: Duke Frederick repents of his wrongs and fully reinstates his brother in the possession of his dukedom.

*A Midsummer-Night's Dream** is a masque like the former and the most fantastic and humorous conception, full of allegorical elements. There was once a law in Athens which compelled a daughter to marry the man her father had chosen for her. In case of a refusal, she was to become a priestess of Diana for life. Hermia, who had been promised to Demetrius, stealthily leaves her home with her lover Lysander to evade the rigour of this

¹ Not the Forest of the Ardennes. The Forest of Arden, now cut down, was at a few miles distance from the birth-place of Shakespeare.

order and to seek a place "where Athenian law" cannot pursue them. They escape to the forest. Helena, Hermia's friend, being in the secret, reveals their flight to Demetrius whom she loves to distraction, whilst he, being insensible to her passion, pursues the couple and in his turn is followed by Helena. All of them get into the power of the fairies whose King and Queen, Oberon and Titania, are themselves at variance with each other and commit the most serious faults and blunders. Oberon, in order to revenge himself on his Queen, orders Puck, a roguish, facetious spirit, to bring him a wonderful flower the juice of which, dropped on the eyelids of a sleeping person, has the power to make him dote on the first object he sees on awaking. This juice Oberon pours on the eyelids of his sleeping Queen and orders Puck to operate the same trick on Demetrius. But Puck, taking Lysander for Demetrius, makes things worse confounded. Lysander forgets his love for Hermia and adores Helena, who from this sudden change thinks his extravagant love only a mockery. Puck, to amend his mistake, applies the love-charm to Demetrius, and now both men overwhelm Helena with passionate protestations of love who believes them full of mischief, and in violent terms reproaches Hermia for it. The two charmed lovers are about to fight, when Puck, at his master's command, bewitches their senses. Overcome by fatigue they sink down and fall asleep. Meanwhile Titania has fared still worse. Some simple, honest Athenian citizens, "rude mechanicals", have come to rehearse a play to be represented in honour of Duke Theseus' wedding. On Titania's awaking, her eye first meets one of these clowns on whom Puck, to heighten the effect, has fixed an ass's head, and she must dote on him sorely against her will. At last, Oberon breaks the charm by means of another flower and true love is restored to all of them.

*The Tempest** treats of another fantastical story. Prospero, the late Duke of Milan, had been dethroned by his false brother Antonio. With his daughter Miranda, then a child, he is abandoned "in a rotten carcass of a boat" to the wild waves; they land on an enchanted island, where Prospero acquires magical powers, and is obeyed by Ariel, an airy spirit, whom he had delivered from a fir tree where he had been imprisoned by a witch, named Sycorax, and by her son Caliban, an ugly monster. Years after, it so happened that in a terrible tempest, excited by Prospero with the help of his spirits, Antonio and Fernando, son of Alonso, King of Naples, were shipwrecked on the same island, where Prospero exercised his magical influence over them. Fernando and Miranda fall in love with each other, and after many trials, which Fernando has to undergo and of which he stands the test to the full satisfaction of Prospero, the latter consents to their union. The two brothers are reconciled and all return to Milan, where Prospero resumes his power. Fernando, now joined in marriage to Miranda, becomes King of Naples.

The Winter's Tale.^{*} Polyxenes, King of Bohemia, stays on a long visit at the court of his old friend Leontes, King of Sicily, when he is suspected by him to entertain illicit relations to Queen Hermione; and although the oracle of Delphi declares her innocent, she is cast into prison, whilst Polyxenes is obliged hurriedly to fly from Sicily. In her dungeon the Queen is delivered of a daughter, who by the King's cruel order is to be exposed. Antinous, charged with this dreadful commission, is shipwrecked on the Bohemian coast and torn by a bear; yet the child,

Perdita, is saved and brought up by an old shepherd. Sixteen years later, having become a pretty maiden, Perdita has won the heart of Florizel, the son of King Polyxenes. When their secret love is betrayed to the King, they both fly to Sicily at the court of Leontes, whither Polyxenes pursues them. By some precious ornaments, Perdita is soon recognized, and both parents consent to the union of their children. — During these long years, Hermione, thought dead long ago, has found a secret asylum with her friend Paulina, the widow of Antinous. One day she leads Leontes to a hall, containing a marble statue of Hermione, which all on a sudden becomes alive. It is the Queen herself! She descends from the pedestal and sinks into the arms of her husband and her children.

*Much Ado about Nothing**. Hero, the daughter of Leonato, the governor of Messina, is of a gentle but serious character, while Beatrice, her friend, is of a sprightly disposition. One day, Don Pedro, Prince of Arragon, returning home with his friends Claudio and Benedick from a victorious war, pay a visit to their old friend Leonato. Claudio falls in love with Hero and, by the Prince's mediation, gets her father's consent. Benedick and Beatrice, both of inexhaustible good humour, begin with railing at each other, but soon become aware of their secret mutual love which, by a cunning stratagem, they are directed to learn from each other. — In the Prince's company is his half-brother Don John, a melancholy fellow, always brooding mischief. He slanders the innocent Hero, and by a wicked device, effected in the night preceding her wedding-day, succeeds to convince Claudio of her seeming guilt, who proclaims her false in the moment of their wedding-ceremony. Her innocence, however, is soon brought to light, and the nuptials are celebrated at the same time with those of Benedick and Beatrice. Don John is arrested in his attempt at flight and put to prison.

*The Merry Wives of Windsor**. Falstaff, always in embarrassed circumstances, resolves to try his fortune in love. He writes at once two identical love-letters, one to Mrs. Page, the other to Mrs. Ford, two honest dames of Windsor. Nym and Pistol, his bottle companions, who are angry with him, denounce him to both husbands. Meanwhile the two ladies happen to show their letters to each other and resolve to make the profligate smart for it, informing him that his suit is accepted. While Mr. Page wholly confides in his wife's fidelity, Mr. Ford is quite jealous and learns from Falstaff himself, whom he pays a visit in disguise, the hour of the appointed rendezvous. He surprises Falstaff, who, slipping into a washing-basket, is covered with dirty linen and thrown into the Thames. However, not yet cured from his passion by this cold bath, he on a second visit is compelled to make his escape in the disguise of an ill-famed, ugly female, after having received a sound thrashing. On a third appointment, at night in Windsor Park, he appears in the costume of a hunter, when a troop of ghosts and hobgoblins assail him most unmercifully. Then he relinquishes his love-thoughts for ever. — A second story is artfully interwoven with this one. Young Fenton loves the graceful Anne Page, who returns his affection. But he is rejected by the parents who have each separately fixed on a different husband for their child. At this nightly adventure, Anne, who plays the fairy-queen, is to run away with the lover appointed by each parent. She chooses neither, but steals away with Fenton, whom she recognises by a secret sign, and they become a happy couple.

Shakespeare's *Historical Plays*, fourteen in number, form two groups, according to their subjects being either drawn from Roman or English history. To the former belong *Coriolanus**, *Julius Caesar**, *Antony and Cleopatra**, and *Pericles*; the second group, comprising *King John**, *Richard II.**, *Henry IV.*, (two parts), *Henry V.**, *Henry VI.*, (three parts), *Richard III.**, and *Henry VIII.*, constitutes a grand national epic in dramatic form, representing a splendid picture of national glory and distress, extending from the Crusades to the Reformation: *King John* and *Henry VIII.* may be regarded as the prologue and the epilogue; *Richard III.* holds the most prominent place. They are not dramas in the strict sense of the word, but great historical, dialogized pictures.

Julius Caesar. At the Lupercalia the people are thronging the streets of Rome to see Caesar and his train assisting at the race celebrated on this occasion. On his way, a soothsayer warns him of the Ides of March, whom, however, he does not heed. Cassius remains behind to prevail on Brutus, Caesar's best friend and favourite, to join the party of the conspirators against Caesar's life. After a hard struggle, he consents and takes the lead in the conspiracy. Meanwhile Caesar, warned by different signs and particularly by a dreadful dream of his wife Calpurnia, resolves to stay away from the senate house; but at length, persuaded by Decius Brutus, one of the conspirators, he betakes himself to the meeting. On his entering the Senate, the conspirators throng around him and in the moment a petition is presented to him by Casca, he is pierced by twenty-three wounds. He sinks down and dies at the foot of Pompey's statue. Then Antony, Caesar's friend, obtains leave from Brutus „to speak in Caesar's funeral”, which he does in so masterly a way that the mob is roused to revolt against the conspirators. They must leave Rome in the most hurried flight. Then Antony, Octavianus, Caesar's nephew, and Lepidus consult about the measures to be taken against the republicans. They assemble an army and defeat them at the battle of Philippi. Cassius rushes into his own sword; so does Brutus to whom Caesar's ghost had appeared twice before the battle. His body is interred with military honours.

Besides these plays, a number of unauthorized pieces have been ascribed to Shakespeare, of which the following seem to be the most warranted: *Edward III.*, *Sir John Oldcastle*, *Arden of Feversham*, *The London Prodigal*, and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*.

There can be distinguished four great periods in Shakespeare's dramatic career, of which the first may not unfitly be called the tentative period, the time of experimenting. In the second, he wrote his English historical plays and the most humorous and refined of his comedies. The third period, from 1600—1610, is that of tragedies; it is overcast by a tragic gloom. In it he paints the darker passions and vices of the

human heart. In the fourth period, he wrote his romantic dramas; a serene and tender light is spread over it; he is serious but not tragic.

Shakespeare lived in a time when the romantic spirit was melting with the modern, idealism with realism. In him these features were most felicitously blended together. He, like a sorcerer with his magic wand, raised the drama from its rude beginnings to the height of its perfection. His dramatic capacity was vast and multiform; it consisted first, in his great *creative power*: his conceptions are as multifarious as those of nature, none resembling the other, wherefore he has not unaptly been called "thousand souled Shakespeare". The life with which he has inspired his beings has rendered them immortal. Secondly, Shakespeare is unrivalled in his *power of delineating characters*, which do not represent types of whole classes, but distinct, independent individualities, with their proper virtues and vices, not exposed in declamatory speeches, but consistently drawn from their actions, which are quite in conformity with their thoughts, passions, inclinations, and surrounding conditions. His heroes are men and not demigods, not heroes in the old romantical or classical sense. Most exquisite are his female characters for depth and delicacy. Thirdly, his *imaginative strength* is not less powerful, being an inexhaustible source of all possible situations, complications, and conditions, even of the abnormal, unreal and supernatural: "He shows the whole world and humanity as in a mirror" and seizes the peculiarities of every age, country, and condition. Next to be mentioned is his unrivalled *knowledge of the human heart*. He traces the human passions from the softest to the wildest, the most secret emotions and the most hidden motives, as well as the wild furies and terrors of the outraged soul and the agonizing heart. Finally, his *language* must be pointed out as being in the highest degree dramatic, flexible, and characteristic. Thought and word are flowing into one another in perfect harmony; it is, besides, "rich in words of new senses".

Thus Shakespeare's capacities and merits may be called universal, though he is not exempt from faults, which were mostly occasioned by the notions, customs, errors, prejudices, and the rude tastes of his time, whose influence he could not escape. These blemishes are chiefly to be met with in his language, which is not seldom coarse, obscure, and obsolete, and, especially in his earlier pieces, infected by bombastic ex-

pressions and euphuistic conceits; he is particularly fond of indulging in affected, over-refined thoughts and in plays on words. His manifold anachronisms,¹ however, are quite immaterial to the matchless character of his works.

None of Shakespeare's plays has been handed down to us from authentical manuscripts or genuine sources; hence the many mutilations, metrical inaccuracies, and unintelligible terms and passages; to the same circumstance a great many of his blemishes may likewise be ascribed.

Shakespeare's tragedies and historical plays are all written in the iambic metre of five feet or the blank-verse, occasionally interspersed with lines of prose, whilst his comedies are couched in prose, intermingled now and then with scenes and whole acts in verse. In his earlier plays he made a frequent use of rhyme, which gradually disappears, till it vanishes altogether. So in *Love's Labour's Lost*, one of his earliest plays, the proportion of rhymed verses to unrhymed ones is like one to two, in *Hamlet*, written in the middle of his career, like one to thirty, and in the *Winter's Tale*, one of the last, no rhyme is to be found. His power of versification was constantly increasing; in the happy employment of metaphors, "the very fabric of his thought", he is unsurpassed.

The form of Shakespeare's works belongs to his time and country, the spirit of his poetry is a possession of mankind. Therefore Ben Jonson says of him: "He was not of an age, but for all times".

The first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays appeared in 1623, published by John Heminge and Henry Condell in one folio volume, called the First Folio Edition; separate editions in quarto had appeared previously of half of the number of the plays. They were published four times in his own century, although they had been entirely neglected during the ascendancy of the Puritans. It was reserved to Dr. Johnson to draw the attention of the public to this great genius in his preface to Shakespeare's works (1765), and to the great actor Garrick, to revive his memory, representing Shakespearian characters on the stage. In Germany, Lessing revealed him to the literary world (1750), Goethe and Schiller admired

¹ Thus Roman Senators appear with watches and Roman soldiers with drums. The sea-coast of Bohemia (*Winter's Tale* III, 3) is another of his generally quoted blunders.

him, Wieland first, and Schlegel and Tieck (1797—1810) after, produced translations of his dramatic works, of which the latter still occupies an honourable place at the present day.

The two authentic narrative poems of Shakespeare are *Venus and Adonis**¹, which bears all the marks of youth, and *The Rape of Lucrece*², exhibiting the poet's great power of delineating human passions.

Shakespeare's *Sonnets*³ are not only remarkable for their grace, tenderness, and rich fancy, but also for their containing confessions of his personal feelings, "pointing to some deep wrongs he suffered in love and friendship". It has also been maintained that they were composed on imaginary themes. They were dedicated by the publisher to M. W. H., who is supposed to have been William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, one of Shakespeare's most powerful friends.

§ 35.

THE DECLINE OF THE NATIONAL DRAMA.

Ben Jonson and his School.*

At the side of the national or popular drama, recently founded by Shakespeare, another direction was at the same time arising, that of the classic drama, characterised by a want of poetical imagination, dramatic action, and reality of life, and by a sober, intellectual, and moralizing tendency. Instead of Shakespearian universality, representing human nature in its complexity, a limited view began to prescribe the rules for representing characters; "manners, which were called humours, filled the scene". Its head was

Ben Jonson⁴ (1573—1637). He was born in London, 1573, and educated at the Westminster Grammar school. The earlier part of his life was full of strange vicissitudes. Being compelled by his stepfather to become a bricklayer, he rebelled against it and served as a soldier in the Low-Countries, distinguishing himself by his bravery. Returned to England, he followed the irresistible impulse of his genius and devoted himself to literary studies. In his twentieth year, he joined one of the London theatres, "The Curtain", as a player, although without great success, perhaps for want of grace and beauty of person. Killing a fellow actor in a duel and receiving himself a wound, he was "brought near the gallows". He is said to have twice changed

his religion and, on his returning to his Protestant mother-church, to have drunk out the whole chalice in token of the sincerity of his recantation. Meanwhile he had become one of the leading authors of the day and formed a warm friendship with Shakespeare, who acted in his plays. In 1616 he was raised to the post of poet-laureate. Through his social qualities, his great conversational powers, and especially through his ready wit, and his generous, though somewhat overbearing behaviour, he became one of the leading members of the "Mermaid", a club, founded by Sir W. Raleigh, and frequented by the celebrated men of the day, where he often indulged in violent disputes and combats of wit. He was also welcomed at the Court. Towards the end of his life, he lived in needy circumstances and ill-health, and died of paralysis, almost neglected, in 1637. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, where a stone marks his resting-place, bearing the touching words:

"O rare Ben Johnson!"¹

The works of Jonson are of a miscellaneous character: he composed 15 comedies, 2 tragedies, 35 masques, a number of smaller poems, and some prose works, the last collected under the title of "*Timber, or Discoveries made upon Men and Matter*".

In his comedies, he displays a great variety of characters, devoid, however, of real life and sensation. They may be called "comedies of morals"; for in each of them he levels his wit and satire at one of the frailties or vices of society. In 1598 appeared *Every Man in his Humour*, which was followed by *Every Man out of his Humour*. Among the rest, the most noteworthy are *The Poetaster*, directed against some inferior poets, *Volpone the Fox*, *The Alchimist*, and *The Silent Woman*. His two tragedies, *Catiline* and *Sejanus**, are stately and cold, classical productions. Jonson's thirty-five masques are of quite a different character, displaying all that is delicate, elegant, and graceful in language and in sentiment, although, after the fashion of the time, stained with servile compliments paid to the King and Queen and to distinguished courtiers.

Ben Jonson's greatest title to immortality, however, is his Ode to the memory of his "Beloved Lord and Master Shakespeare".

¹ Thus his name is spelled in the epitaph.

Ben Jonson was an entirely self-made man and possessed, no doubt, great intellectual powers and an extraordinary amount of learning, combined with acute and extensive observation of human life. Although he liked to call himself "the humorous poet", he was only of a satirical vein, unmercifully censuring the frailties of the time, and supplying his want of poetical fancy by his keen intellect and a strict observation of dry, classic rules. It is very significant of the frame of his mind and character, that among all his numerous creations, there is no attractive female one.

Every Man in his Humour. In this play the humours or dispositions of men, particularly of those idle, swaggering fellows, called "Gulls", are developed. — Old Knowell, a country gentleman, learns that his son, whom he believes to be a zealous student, has become the companion of some choice specimens of this sort of men. He tries to ferret out his ways, but is thwarted by the shrewdness of his own servant, Brainworm, who even succeeds to quiet all his doubts. During this time, young Knowell assists at many amusing scenes among the Gulls, headed by Captain Bobadil, a blustering, swearing braggart, who yet shortly after cowardly submits to the most shameful treatment.

In a side-plot, the jealous humour of a rich merchant, named Kitely, is exposed to ridicule, when, enticed into an ambush, he expects to surprise his wife deviating from the path of virtue, who, in her turn, had been sent thither to look after him. The situation is most ridiculous and leads to his final cure.

§ 36.

Francis Beaumont (1586—1616) and John Fletcher* (1579—1625). These two dramatic poets, whose lives and works are intensely interwoven, were both of high birth and education and superior to Jonson in poetical imagination, though inferior with regard to the extent and solidity of learning. Their dramatic works amount to 52, of which 25 were written by Fletcher alone, after the untimely death of Beaumont in 1616. Whilst the muse of Beaumont was rather dignified and tragic, that of Fletcher was more of a light and comic bent. All their productions are pervaded by an easy and animated spirit, and distinguished for their elegance, amusing wit, and eloquence, though often disgraced by obscenities in thought and language. The society they represent is mostly indecent; their females are unnatural conceptions, abnormal either in virtue or wickedness.

Among their dramas, which are of a high tragic character, the most prominent are *The Maid's Tragedy*, *Philaster*, *A King and no King*, all characterised by vivid dramatical action and

language. Among their comedies, which are all violently farcical and extravagant, the most interesting is *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (murderous club); there are besides to be mentioned *Rule a Wife and have a Wife*, *The Woman-Hater*, *The Honest Man's Fortune*, and *The Spanish Curate*.

Fletcher, besides, composed *The Faithful Shepherdess*, a lovely pastoral poem.

Philip Massinger* (1584—1639), of noble birth, spent two years at Oxford, where he got imbued with the essence of fine classic learning. His life was a series of struggles and disappointments; one morning he was found dead in his bed.

As a play-wright he is distinguished for elegance of style and versification, the soundness and nobility of his sentiments, and for his calm, natural diction, though constantly soiled by coarse and lascivious expressions, the vicious habit of the time. He wrote tragedies, romantic dramas and comedies. Among the first, the finest are: *The Fatal Dowry*, *The Unnatural Combat*, *The Duke of Milan*; among the last: *The Old Law and a New Way to pay Old Debts*, which is still surviving on the stage.

John Ford* (1586—1639), “the great painter of unhappy love” and “master of dramatic effect”, possessed an almost morbid inclination for unnatural and awful subjects. “His moral sense was gratified by indignation at the dark possibilities of sin and by compassion for rare extremes of suffering.” The most powerful of his tragedies are *Brother and Sister* and *The Broken Heart*. His historical drama, *Perkin Warbeck*, the best after Shakespeare's, still occupies the stage.

John Webster*, the most powerful writer, “whose terrible funereal muse was death”, more resembles Shakespeare in his skilful searching and painting of the human heart, whereby he not only excites terror but sympathy with his suffering heroes. He has been called “the noble-minded” for the sublimity of his language and sentiments. The best of his tragedies is *The Duchess of Amalfi*.

George Chapman* († 1634) deserves remembrance for his fiery, passionate vein and appropriate language, though often transgressing the limits of naturalness and moderation. He was also the first translator of Homer into spirited and lofty English.

§ 37.

MISCELLANEOUS POETS.

Michael Drayton (1563—1631) was a voluminous writer of great originality. His most important production is the *Polyolbion*, a poem of thirty cantos containing a tedious topographical description of England and Wales, interspersed with legends, allegories, and personifications, and comprehending besides “a wonderful mass of curious erudition”. Of some poetic interest is his graceful ballad *Nymphidia* of a mock-heroic character. He also wrote *The Barons' Wars* describing the civil wars of Edward II. Drayton possesses a great command of language, and his poetry excels in beautiful fancy and fine feeling.

Phineas and Giles Fletcher (1584 till about 1650), the nephews of the dramatist and great admirers of Spenser. The first composed an allegorical poem of five cantos, *The Purple Island*, which is a symbolical description of the parts and functions of the human body and mind. Giles Fletcher wrote a beautiful religious poem, *Christ's Victory and Triumph*, whose subject is the redemption of man.

William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585—1649), the most distinguished of Scotch poets of this period and the friend of Ben Jonson and Drayton, wrote *Sonnets* which are described by Hallam as “polished and elegant, free from conceits and bad taste, of pure and unblemished English”.

Bishop Hall (1574—1656) must be considered as the real founder of *satire* in England. He composed six books of poems, in which he particularly attacked the vices and affectations of literature in an easy and animated language of classic precision, though occasionally severe and obscure.

Donne (1573—1631), Dean of St. Paul’s, the author of various satiric poems, occasionally vague as the former, is the first of the so-called “metaphysical poets” (v. § 45), in whom intellect prevailed over poetical sentiment. His versification is “rugged and tuneless”.

PROSE-LITERATURE.

§ 38.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH*, 1552—1618.

Sir Walter Raleigh, the valiant soldier, bold navigator and adventurer, soon attracted the favour of the “Maiden-Queen” by his manifold accomplishments and courtly manners. His career was rather romantic and adventurous. He bravely fought for five years in continental wars for the cause of the Protestants, then distinguished himself in the subjection of Ireland, where he received 12 000 acres of land as a reward. After this, he eagerly applied himself to the colonisation of Virginia, whence he is said to have brought the potato and the tobacco plants; he took a leading part in the destruction of the “Invincible Armada”, was engaged in the conquest of Guiana, and conducted the siege of Cadix, thus winning military renown and courtly favours. At the accession of James I., Walter Raleigh was stripped of almost all his honours, and being unreasonably accused of conspiracy, he was imprisoned in the Tower for nearly thirteen years under sentence of death. There he spent his time with literary occupations and chiefly in the compo-

sition of his *History of the World*. In order to regain his liberty, he proposed to the needy King a new expedition for the discovery of gold mines on the banks of the Orinoco, which, however, proved a failure. The capture of St. Thomas, a Spanish settlement, where Raleigh lost his eldest son, so incensed the Spanish, that they cried for vengeance, to which James readily consented to please the Spanish court. W. Raleigh was executed on his former charge of treason in 1618. In touching the keen edge of the axe, he smiling observed: "This is a sharp medicine, but it will cure all diseases."

Raleigh's *History of the World*, a masterpiece of vigorous prose, relates the events of the chief countries of the ancient world, beginning at the Creation and breaking off with the fall of the Macedonian kingdom in 168 B. C. It is rich in deep learning and spirited eloquence and pervaded by a solemn thoughtfulness. He composed many other prose works and was also a successful poet.

§ 39.

FRANCIS BACON*, 1561—1626.

Francis Bacon, the most prominent figure in the realm of prose and the founder of modern philosophy, was the son of the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England. He received a careful education, and from his childhood gave evidences of an inquiring spirit, great presence of mind, and a precocious gravity, attracting even the attention of Queen Elizabeth. Already in his sixteenth year, he completed his studies at Cambridge, where he had imbibed a great dislike for the philosophy of Aristotle. According to the custom of the times, he travelled on the continent, where he spent four years in France, Germany, and Italy, increasing his knowledge of politics, letters, and mankind, and laying down his observations in his juvenile work, *Essay on the State of Europe*. On the death of his father in 1579, he was recalled and, contrary to his inclination for the study of science, was compelled by the unkindness of his uncle, Lord Burleigh, to embrace the law. He accordingly entered Gray's Inn, where he soon distinguished himself, winning great honours and the friendship of the powerful Essex, who endeavoured to procure him the post of Solicitor-General. Frustrated in this attempt by Bacon's mighty and jealous relatives,

the Cecils, he consoled him by the gift of his considerable estate of Twickenham Park. However, the career of the young lawyer was not to be checked; he rose rapidly, not only in his profession, but also as an orator and philosopher. In the year 1585, only 24 years old, he obtained a seat in the House of Commons, where he attracted general admiration by his extraordinary powers of eloquence, and in 1605 published his first philosophical treatise, *On the Advancement of Learning**, the forerunner of his later series of philosophical works.

Already from the very beginning of his public career, the deplorable defects of his moral character, base flattery, abject subserviency to the Court and court favorites, faithlessness towards friends, ambition, and avarice, became visible, offering a striking contrast to his brilliant intellect and preparing his final infamous downfall. Thus he not only abandoned his former friend and protector, the Earl of Essex, who was hurrying to his ruin, but also greatly contributed to precipitate him.

At the accession of James I., Francis Bacon was knighted; then he married Miss Alice Burnham, the daughter of a rich London alderman, and successively rose to greater honours. In 1613 he was made Solicitor-General, soon after Attorney-General, and in 1617 reached the summit of his career, becoming Lord High Chancellor of England and being created Baron of Verulam and three years later Viscount of St. Albans. During the four years he filled this high place, he made himself guilty of acts of the basest servility and corruption, so that the House of Commons in 1621 brought in an impeachment of 22 charges against him before the House of Lords. He was found guilty "of many acts of gross corruption as a judge", and sentenced to a fine of £ 40,000 and to imprisonment in the Tower during the King's pleasure. The first, however, was remitted by royal favour, and from the second he was released after two days. His remaining five years of disgrace, he spent in retirement, passing his time with books and experiments, intrigues and flatteries. He died of a cold fever owing to an experiment to preserve meat by means of freezing, himself stuffing a fowl with snow. According to his wish, he was buried at his mother's side at St. Albans, leaving his affairs in an embarrassed state. Pope has described his character with equal happiness and brevity in his *Essay on Man*, as "the wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind".

Bacon's great philosophical work, *Instauratio Magna, or*

Great Institution of True Philosophy, planned when he was only 26 years old, was to consist of six books, but is not finished. The most important part of it is the second book, called *Novum Organum**¹, i. e. *New Instrument of Philosophy*, in which the principles of his method are laid down. In a direct opposition to those of ancient philosophy, they purpose the exploration of nature by experience. By means of careful observation, experiments, and comparison, he from singular and individual facts ascends to general principles or laws, by the so-called *analytic* or *inductive* method, or *a posteriori*, for theory being only *posterior* to the examination of individualities and details from which it is derived. The opposite order, generally followed by ancient philosophers, pre-establishing general laws for special examples, is callhed the *synthetic* or *deductive* method, or *a priori*, theory being *prior* to its application in practice.

Equally different are the aims of the two philosophic systems. Aristotle's ultimate object of philosophy was to purify and elevate the human mind to an ideal height, enabling it to contemplate the *supreme good, true, and beautiful*, any practical utility being considered as unworthy of the sage. The final aim of Baconian philosophy is to exercise and concentrate all the intellectual powers, in order to improve the happiness of mankind; ideal virtue and perfect wisdom being regarded as impossibilities.

Bacon's English writings are very numerous. Foremost stands his volume of *Essays*², which were completely published in 1612. They show a great variety of subjects, from the gravest to the most trifling, all treated with great depth of intellect; the most important of them is the *Essay on the Wisdom of the Ancients*. Among his other works, mention must be made of the *History of Henry VII.**

Bacon's language is concise and vigorous, and his style highly ornamented with metaphorical expressions. All his works, highly reflective and poetical, are amongst the finest specimens of English prose.

§ 40.

MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS.

Richard Hooker³ (1553—1600), one of the most learned and most eloquent of Anglican divines, was of humble origin, studied at Oxford, and spent some years in the modest calling of a country parson. In consequence

of his extraordinary capacities, he was appointed Master of the Temple in London, where the meek and modest man came in conflict with his colleague, an austere Calvinist, and therefore changed his high post for a quiet parsonage in Wiltshire, where he composed his famous work, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, of which the first four books appeared in 1594, the fifth in 1597, and the last only after his death.

This important work is, in the first place, an investigation and exposition of the fundamental principles of the Anglican Church, and in the second, a defence of it against the attacks of Rome and the Calvinists. It contains a vast deal of erudition, expounded with close reasoning, in a perspicuous, correct, and flowing style, embellished with the finest figures of poetry, yet free from conceits and pedantry, and of a dignified, majestic cast, wherefore it has justly been named a masterpiece of English eloquence.

Robert Burton (1576—1640) is the author of a curious work, *The Anatomy of Melancholy by Democritus Junior* (1621), treating the causes, symptoms, and cure of melancholy in a most strange and irregular way, by cramming his own quaint observations and witty remarks with a wonderful mass of learned quotations from mediaeval and mostly unknown writers. Burton spent the greater part of his life at the College of Christ Church in Oxford, where he died in 1640, very likely hastening his end to make it correspond with his own horoscope. His epitaph in the cathedral of Oxford is very characteristic: "Hic jacet Democritus, junior, cui vitam dedit et mortem Melancholia". ("Here rests Democritus, junior, to whom melancholy gave both life and death".)

Lord Herbert of Cherbury* (1581—1648), a learned theologian and historian, was the first sceptic writer in the English language. Whilst on an embassy in Paris, he published his principal work, *De Veritate* (On Truth) (1616), in which he professes himself an advocate of deism or the doctrine of unrevealed religion. He is, besides, known for his *History of Henry VIII.*, published after his death, in which he sides with the King. He also was the first writer of an autobiography in the English language.

CHAPTER VII.

§ 41.

THE CIVIL-WAR PERIOD*, 1625—1688.

Charles I.	1625—1649.	The Protectorate 1653—1660.
The Commonwealth 1649—1653.		Charles II. 1660—1685.
	James II. 1685—1688.	

With respect to the poetical literature, this period may not incorrectly be called one of transition, viz., from Elizabethan originality, creative power, and fancy, to a cold imitation of French models, classic accuracy, and creations of the intellect.

The sixty years over which it extends were the most agitated and eventful in English history: civil and religious liberty waged a terrible war against monarchical absolutism and puritanical austerity and bigotry, the fatal results of which manifested themselves in a lasting separation of political principles, and a sad dismemberment in religious opinions and doctrines.

The Puritan party, which at first had been rigorously restrained and ill-treated, gradually rose to importance and influence, and loudly claimed a reform in Church and State. Through the many illegal proceedings and acts of tyranny, exercised by Charles I. and his "Star-chamber",¹ presided over by Archbishop Laud, the discontent of the people rose to the utmost degree, and the conflict between the King and the Parliament had to be settled by arms.

In 1642 the civil war broke out; London was in the power of the Parliament. The acrimonious and revengeful spirit of the austere sect of Puritans, who despised arts and sciences, and all the refinements and enjoyments of life, began its sway by closing all the theatres, which were considered as pernicious to society and religion.² Churches and monuments of art were mutilated, pictures representing biblical subjects were burnt. During fourteen years, all plays and entertainments, as masques, dances, may-poles etc., were abolished even the celebration of Christmas was denounced as sinful, poets and especially dramatic writers were discredited, Spenser's *Fairy Queen* prohibited, and by an ordinance of the year 1648, actors were placed on a common level with "rogues and vagabonds". Thus monarchical oppression and civil bondage were followed by religious slavery, with all its abominable horrors, and by a complete crush of all scientific and aesthetic pursuits.

The stern and energetic Oliver Cromwell became the head of the army and finally of the whole realm. Charles died on the scaffold, and the sullen fanaticism of the Puritans swayed

¹ The "Star-chamber", so called from the decorations of the room in which it met, is already mentioned under Edward III., but was revived by Henry VII. for the speedy and secret punishment of offences against the State.

² "Public sports do not well agree with public calamities, nor public stage-plays with the seasons of humiliation, this being an exercise of sad and pious solemnity, and the other being spectacles of pleasure, too commonly expressing lascivious mirth and levity", — ordained — "that, while these sad causes and set times of humiliation do continue, public stage-plays shall cease and be forborne." (Act of 2. September 1642.)

its iron rod, checking for a time all noble aspirations in the paths of art and literature. Though O. Cromwell's deserts towards England's greatness will ever be recognized, yet the deplorable influences of his policy in matters of religion, morals, and aesthetics are not yet entirely effaced in the present day.

With the Restoration of royalty in 1660, a great reaction took place, especially in the domains of morals and intellect. Returning from his exile in France, Charles II. and his Court set the grievous example of French dissoluteness in customs and manners. A general contagion spread throughout the nation; the mask of piety was thrown off, indecency and immorality became the principal features of society.

This general corruption also infected the language and literature, particularly the drama, which sank to a frightful grossness and impudence. Instead of using simple and natural images, the poets marred their language with licentious expressions and ingenious conceits. Dryden and Dr. Johnson term it the "metaphysical school" (v. § 45). Its influences lasted for about one century. French taste was likewise most powerful in the strict observation of barren rules, especially in the drama;¹ a spirit of scepticism, of satire and criticism was arising and domineering till the middle of the next century, whilst the paths of lyrical poetry were almost left untrodden. Poetry forsook its everlasting springs of nature and genuine sentiment, for the dry fields of the intellect, of precept and imitation.

POETICAL LITERATURE.

§ 42.

JOHN MILTON*, 1608—1674.

On a solitary and lofty height, amidst the turmoils of the 17th century, rises the sublime figure of Milton, the noblest type of Puritanism.

Born on the 9th of December 1608 in London, he grew up under Puritan influences, his father, a scrivener or notary-public, being an ardent republican and austere Puritan. From him, the young boy inherited his calm and noble spirit and his

* Hettner terms it the "drama of etiquette".

tastes for literature and music, and from his mother, his kind and gentle nature. Giving early indications of an extraordinary intellect, he received a refined and careful education, first at home, and from his twelfth year at St. Paul's School, where, for his great personal beauty, fine taste, and morality, he was called the "Lady of the College". His precocious talents and studious habits soon enabled him to enter Christ's College, Cambridge, where he applied himself with great ardour to the study of philosophy, theology, and the classics. In his twenty first year, on Christmas Day, he composed his splendid *Ode on Christ's Nativity* which foreshadows all the essential features of his sublime poetry. In 1632 he quitted the university and spent five years in his father's country house at Horton near Windsor, where he occupied himself with multifarious studies and readings, comprising the literatures of all ages, but above all of the sublime poetry of the Bible, which inspired him with a great enthusiasm for biblical subjects. While thus acquiring a stupendous amount of learning, he composed his minor poems, *Comus*, *Lycidas*, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*.

After the death of his mother, Milton, now thirty years old, went on his travels to the continent for fifteen months, visiting the principal cities of France, Switzerland, and Italy, welcomed everywhere with marked attention, and conversing with the most illustrious men of the day, so with Galileo Galilei, who was then a prisoner of the Inquisition. In Rome his religious and political enthusiasm and his anti-papal zeal almost endangered his personal liberty. It was in Italy where the thought of giving to his nation a great epic poem, ripened in his mind, although he afterwards abandoned the original subject of "King Arthur" for "Paradise Lost". He was recalled by the political troubles of his country, and siding with the Republicans, he entered upon the second phase of his life, that of an eloquent and vehement controversialist, attacking at the same time the Episcopal Church and monarchical government. In a great number of works upon the most important questions of the day, civil as well as ecclesiastical, he became the foremost champion in the great struggle for freedom of thought and religion, opening the series in 1641 with a pamphlet *On Reformation in England*, and rising to an almost superhuman elevation and eloquence in his *Areopagitica**, or "*On Unlicensed Printing*" (1644), in defence of the liberty of the press, the first voice ever raised in its behalf.

* Now at the end of this article.

In 1642 Milton, who meanwhile had set up a school in London, concluded his first marriage with Miss Powell, the daughter of a ruined country gentleman and an adherent of the Royalists. Shortly after their union, his young wife, of cavalier habits and unaccustomed to the quiet and austere frugality of her husband, went from him, and in spite of Milton's urgent remonstrances, did not return for two years, while her family treated him with disrespect. It was during these domestic disturbances that Milton, designing an entire separation from his undutiful wife, wrote his four books *On Divorce* (1644—45), and the tractate *On Education*. Milton, however, was generous enough to pardon her and, after the downfall of royalty, to support her family in his own house. About this time (1646) appeared a collection of his *Odes*, *Sonnets*, *Songs*, *Psalms*, and *Miscellaneous Poems*.

In 1649, at the establishment of the commonwealth, Milton was appointed Latin or Foreign Secretary and reached the summit of his political career with his famous pamphlets: *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649) and *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano* (1651) in Latin, both of a violent and even outrageous language in justification of the execution of the King; the second was particularly directed against the great Dutch scholar De Saumaise or Salmasius who is said to have died in consequence. Then followed his *Ikonoclastes* or *The Image-breaker*, directed against the celebrated *Ikon Basilike* (the royal image), written by Bishop Gauden in the character of the King.

With the Restoration in 1660 begins the last period of the poet's career, which is at the same time the most gloomy and most brilliant of his life. After having been imprisoned for some months and his books publicly burnt, he was released and allowed to retire to a quiet life, which he spent in accomplishing his immortal works, *Paradise Lost* (1667), *Paradise Regained* (1671), and *Samson Agonistes* (1671). The total loss of his eyesight, however, since the year 1652, poverty, and sufferings from gout, and the disrespectful behaviour of his three daughters, darkened his last days. On the 8th of November 1674, the great and noble man calmly breathed his last. His body was interred beside his father in the Church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, London.

Milton had been married three times; his second wife, Catharine Woodcock, died after about eighteen months; his third,

Elizabeth Minshull, tended his declining days with careful affection. In 1737 Milton's ashes were removed into the "Poets' Corner" of Westminster Abbey.

§ 43.

MILTON'S POETICAL WORKS.*

The poetry of Milton is lyric, epic, and dramatic.

The Ode on the Nativity of Christ, his earliest published production, may be regarded as "a fitting prelude" to his *Paradise Lost*, and as the finest ode in the English language.

*Comus** (the name of a magician) is a masque or pastoral drama, interspersed with lyrical passages and exquisite descriptions of natural beauty, founded on an actual occurrence. It excels in dignity and purity of sentiment and language all compositions of this kind.

*Lycidas**, a lovely, pastoral elegy, written in memory of a friend and fellow student, drowned on a voyage to Ireland. It is an imitation of the Italian Canzone, pregnant with poetical and classical learning, in which ancient mythology and Christian theology are mixed in a skilful manner.

*L'Allegro** and *Il Penseroso**, two lovely twin-brothers of charming, descriptive beauty, are composed in the rhymed octosyllabic measure, and represent life and nature as differently reflected in different characters. In the former, they are mirrored by a serene and cheerful temperament, in the second by a serious, melancholy, and meditative disposition. The first prefers the bright daylight, the other the quiet moonlight forest. The manifold aspects of nature and occupations of men are depicted in an exquisite language, abounding in the most felicitous expressions, beautiful thoughts, and finest imagery.

Milton's *English Sonnets** are of unrivalled correctness and composed on the loftiest subjects: religion, patriotism, and domestic affection. Whilst they are filled with the noblest sentiments, they are free from all conceits. The finest are: *To the Nightingale*, *On the Massacre of the Waldenses*, *On his Own Blindness*, *On the Sweetness of Italian Songs*.

Latin and Italian Poems. With respect to his poetical compositions in the Latin tongue, Milton is regarded as without equal among modern poets. He possessed the power of entirely identifying himself with the spirit of the language and the times. His Italian poems, chiefly sonnets, are inferior to the former.

*Paradise Lost**, the greatest epic poem in the English language, was composed in the space of seven years, from 1658 till 1665 (published 1667), and originally consisted of ten books, which were afterwards arranged into twelve. Its threefold subject, *The Fall of the Angels*, *The Creation of the World*, and *The Fall of Man*, is taken from the first chapters of the book of Genesis and a few verses of the Apocalypse, and represents the noblest theme ever treated by any poet. It is conceived in the spirit of Puritanism in its highest and purest manifestation. Its metrical form is the blank-verse, carried to its height of perfection.

Argument of Paradise Lost:

1. In the opening lines, the subject of the Fall of Man is first exposed. Satan and his infernal host, "lying on the burning lake", recover from their fall. He imparts to them the news of the creation of a new world and of man, and his determination to oppose the design of God. The Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, rises from the deep.

2. The evil spirits sit in council. Satan undertakes alone the voyage of discovery and of the temptation of man, whilst the rest betake themselves to their various occupations. He arrives at the gates of Hell, guarded by Sin and Death, passes with difficulty, and comes within sight of the new-created star.

3. Meanwhile God the Father, sitting on his throne in Heaven, with his Son at his right hand, sees Satan flying towards this world. He foretells man's disobedience by aspiring to godhead, and his punishment, whereupon the Son of God freely offers himself in propitiation for his sin, and is adored by the heavenly choir. — Satan, on his journey, meets Uriel, the regent of the sun, and accosting him in the shape of a meanner angel, inquires of him the road to the new world, where he descends in the disguise of an angel of light.

4. Satan is now in prospect of Paradise, overleaps its bounds, and in the shape of a cormorant perches on the tree of life, the highest in the garden. Seeing Adam and Eve, he wonders at their beautiful form and happy state, and overhears their discourse about the forbidden tree of knowledge, whereupon he founds his plan to divert them from God. Gabriel, the guardian angel of Paradise, is warned by Uriel; he appoints two strong angels to guard Adam's bower, where Satan is caught, "squat like a toad", tempting Eve in a dream. After a sign from heaven, he is released.

5. Eve relates her dream to Adam, who comforts her, and after their beautiful morning prayer: "These are thy glorious works, Parent of good" — they go forth to their daily employment. Then Raphael appears, who is sent to warn them, and relates to them the revolt in Heaven.

6. Raphael continues his relation, how in the second day's fight Michael and his angels are put to some disorder by means of devilish engines, and how on the third day, God sends Messiah, his Son, who on his flaming chariot, with 20,000 chariots behind and attended by 10,000 Saints "rushed with whirlwind sound" into the midst of his fierce enemies, who still resist and are driven towards the wall of Heaven, which opening,

they are hurled down into the precipice. Messiah returns triumphantly to his Father.

7. Raphael describes the creation of the world by the Son of God and his angels in six days.

8. Adam inquires into celestial motions and relates his own sensations after his creation, and his first meeting with Eve.

9. The ninth book contains the chief subject of the whole epic: The Temptation and Fall of Man. Satan re-enters Paradise in the shape of a serpent. Adam and Eve, after some debate upon the hinted danger, go separately to their different labours. The Serpent approaches Eve, flatters her, and at last tempts her to eat of the forbidden fruit, which she does. Then Adam, perceiving her lost, resolves to perish with her through vehemence of love. Innocence and happiness are gone for ever.

10. Their transgression is announced in Heaven by the guardian angels of Paradise. Christ descends to judge the transgressors. Satan, triumphant, returns to the Pandemonium, meeting Sin and Death, who determine to go down to the place of man, and to construct a causeway from Chaos to Earth. Satan relates his success, but he and his companions are transformed into serpents and chew dust and bitter ashes. God foretells the final salvation of man. Adam and Eve bewail their fallen condition and seek to appease the offended Deity by repentance and supplication.

11. God, through the intercession of his Son, accepts their repentance but decrees their ejection from Paradise. Michael is sent with a band of angels to dispossess them. He announces their departure, upon which Eve breaks out in woeful lamentation. Leading them upon a hill, the Angel shows them in a vision what shall happen on Earth till the Flood.

12. Michael continues his prophetic picture from the Flood and comforts Adam by his account of the Redemption of Man by the "Seed of Man" and the destinies of the Church until his second coming. They descend the hill, Adam awakens Eve from her sleep, and Michael, in either hand, leads them out of Paradise, the fiery sword waving behind them, and the cherubim on their stations at the entrance of Paradise. —

In this grand Christian epic, Milton's poetical qualities are displayed: majesty and sublimity of conception, harmony and grace of language. His creations, though of extreme simplicity, have an air of grandeur about them which inspires us with awe, sympathy, or adoration. Even the creation of Satan himself deserves this praise.¹ His versification is highly melodious in

¹ "The spirits of Milton are unlike those of almost all other writers. His fiends, in particular, are wonderful creations. They are not metaphysical abstractions. They are not wicked men. They are not ugly beasts. They have no horns, no tails, none of the fee-faw-fum of Tasso and Klopstock. They have just enough in common with human nature to be intelligible to human beings. Their characters are, like their forms, marked by a certain dim resemblance to those men, but exaggerated to gigantic dimensions, and veiled in mysterious gloom."

Macaulay, *Essay on Milton*.

tone and rhythm, ever "solemn, dignified, and flexible", and ever varying in structure and cadence with the changeful scenes and conceptions of the poet's fertile muse. There is a solemn dignity in the stately march of his diction; his harmonious verses, though not entirely free from harsh passages, resound like the peal of the organ through the vaults of a holy dome. He greatly owes this effect to his intense and rapturous delight in music, which inspired some of his finest lyrical passages. Of equal beauty are the illustrations which he draws from nature and the chivalric and romantic recollections, with which he interspersed and adorned his splendid descriptions.

Milton's greatest work, however, is not without some defects, the chief of which consists in the want of reality and distinctness of his figures. The frequent interspersion of theological and dogmatical questions must also be reckoned among its deficiencies, nor do the many episodes, especially the too extended narratives of Raphael and Michael, add to its perfection. Harsh passages and strange Latinisms in his language, must finally be mentioned as spots in this bright sun.

*Paradise Regained**, published in 1671, consists only of four books. It is generally considered as inferior, though the poet preferred it to the former. Its main defects are the want of action and interest, and the many arguments and tiresome disquisitions upon dogmatical subjects between Christ and the Tempter, imparting to it a didactic tendency. The subject, which is drawn from the 4th chapter of Matthew, is the *Temptation and Triumph of Christ*.

Argument of Paradise Regained:

1. After his baptism, Christ undertakes to defeat the plans of the Tempter. He retires into the desert, where Satan makes his appearance in the shape of a peasant arguing with him.
2. A great council of the evil spirits. Then Satan tempts Christ with a great banquet, and afterwards with wealth.
3. Satan continues his temptations, offering Christ the kingdom of Asia.
4. Depiction of the greatness and glory of Rome and Athens. Christ, in the midst of a terrible tempest in the desert, is carried away by Satan to the pinnacle of the Temple of Jerusalem, where the latter is again defeated and reduced to silence. It concludes with a triumphal hymn of the angels ministering to their Lord.

*Samson Agonistes** is composed in strict imitation of the classic drama, "but neither impassioned, nor strong in character, nor poetical in its lyrical parts". It represents Samson's capti-

vity and his revenge on his oppressors, and is at the same time a touching picture of the author himself. It was set to music by Händel in an oratorio (1742).

In spite of his great excellencies, Milton cannot be considered a true-born poet touched with the heavenly flame; for his poetical conceptions and creations, although of sublime grandeur, are void of reality and passion, the two first requisites of genuine poetry. In him they were supplied by a strong logic reasoning, high rhetorical talents, vast and multifarious learning, and an unlimited command of language.

§ 44.

SAMUEL BUTLER*, 1612—1680.

Milton, the poet of the Puritans, found his counterpart in Samuel Butler, the poet of the Cavaliers, and “the Prince of English burlesque”. He was the son of a little farmer in Worcestershire and received his whole education at the Free-school of Worcester. Want of means prevented him from studying at any college or university, nevertheless, he gradually attained an uncommon amount of learning through private studies, and also cultivated music and painting. He led a rather obscure and checkered life, filling the office of a clerk or tutor in various great families, amongst others in that of a fanatic Puritan,¹ where he, no doubt, collected his rich observations on the bigotry and ridicule of the austere sect. Advanced in years, he concluded an unlucky marriage. Although his literary works were greatly enjoyed by the triumphant party, particularly by the King who often liked to quote verses from them, he always remained poor, died in obscurity, and was buried in St. Paul’s churchyard in London at the expense of a friend and admirer.²

The work which has rendered his name famous is his *Hudibras** (1663), a biting and clever satire on the follies and weaknesses of the fanatic Puritans, and at the same time a faithful picture of the violent reaction against their unpopular bigotry. The idea was very likely suggested to the author by the ‘Don Quixote of Cervantes’. It is left a fragment of nine cantos in the short tetrameter. Its hero, Hudibras, intended

¹ Sir Samuel Luke, member of Parliament and amongst those excluded after “Pride’s Purge”. He most likely also furnished the original to Butler’s *Hudibras*.

² His name was Longueville.

for the type of a staunch Puritan, is a pedantic, swaggering, and hypocritical coward, sallying forth with Ralph, his clerk, to extirpate the common amusements of the people; he is represented almost as an object of disgust and hatred. All the characters of *Hudibras*, besides, are of a disgusting vulgarity.

The poem, although wanting unity of action and interest, and occupying but a low degree in the range of poetic conception, is nevertheless a remarkable work for its inexhaustible and pungent wit, excellent painting of characters, and description of incidents. Besides, the author displays in it an unusual fertility of invention and a great amount of sound sense and erudition. The comic effect of the whole is heightened by the oddity and drollery of rhymes, and the concise and pregnant language, which has furnished a great number of proverbial sayings.

§ 45.

METAPHYSICAL POETS.

The so-called "metaphysical poets", in whom sentiment and passion were superseded by intellect and fancy, nature by the rules of art, originality by convention and imitation, genuine feeling by refinement and learning, had not suddenly sprung up. Their style of writing had been introduced from Italy since the middle of the reign of Elizabeth and fostered by French influence during the reigns of the two Charles's, attaining to its height in the correct and artificial works of Dryden and Pope. This sort of mannerism in thought and language chiefly invaded the realms of lyric, didactic, and satiric verse, less that of dramatic poetry which, however, also degenerated under its uncongenial influence. Over-refinement and subtlety of thought, ingenious and quaint conceits, strained and remote analogies, and far-fetched images, combined with a servile observance of conventional and formal rules, were the chief features of this class of poets.

Sir John Suckling (1609—1641) and **Lovelace** (1618—1658) were two unlucky cavalier poets, companions in sentiment and misfortune. The former, charged with high treason, suffered imprisonment, then fled to France, where he is said to have committed suicide. His comedies are of no particular merit, but very much improved stage business by better scenery. Some of his lyrics were written in prison; the finest of his productions is his *Ballad on a Wedding*. His verses are animated by a spirit of gaiety and fancifulness; loyalty, love, and gallantry form the themes of his poetry.

Lovelace, the scion of an old military family, who also suffered long and repeated imprisonment for his loyalty, and died in utmost

distress. He published *Odes and Songs* while in prison. They are more of a serious cast, breathing the spirit of romantic loyalty and gallantry; only a few survive in public estimation.

Edmund Waller (1605—1687) was a man of great accomplishments and courtly manners, but of great fickleness of character, “joining and deserting all causes in succession”. Having celebrated, in an ode “*Upon the Death of the Lord Protector*”, the merits and the glory of Cromwell, he not long after, in an inferior poem, welcomed the returning Stuart. When the latter hinted at its inferiority, Waller is said to have given the sagacious and flattering reply: “Poets, Sire, succeed better in fiction than in truth”. His verses are smooth and elegant, but without ardour and imagination.

William Davenant (1605—1668) was the successor of Ben Jonson in the post of a poet-laureate, and one of the principal actors in the restoration of the theatre after the rigorous Puritan rule. He adapted the plays of Shakespeare to the new classical taste of France, and himself composed a great number of plays. He is chiefly remembered as the author of *Gondibert*, a tedious and monotonous heroic poem.

Abraham Cowley (1618—1667) published his first volume of poems when only fifteen years old, was expelled from the University of Cambridge for his Royalist principles, and went with Queen Henriette to France, where he lived for twelve years. He spent his later years in rural retirement, occupied with literary pursuits. Cowley was a man of extensive learning and refined taste, excelling as well in prose as in poetry. His poems treat of multifarious subjects and are marked by a constant straining after effect, substituting “intellect for the unaffected outpourings of feeling”. In the imitation of the classics, the *Pindarics* and *Odes of Anacreon*, he was equally distinguished. The greatest of his poems, *The Davideis*, taken from the Old Testament, remained unfinished. Cowley was the most popular poet of his time.

§ 46.

THE NEW ENGLISH DRAMA.*

With the re-opening of the theatres after the Restoration, a new era was inaugurated in dramatic literature through the corruptible influence of the French or classical drama which greatly differed from the old English drama in form and in tenor or spirit. With regard to the former, the distinction between tragedy and comedy was strongly marked, and the three unities observed; the latter was characterised by an abject immorality. Tragedy more than comedy followed French models, producing a sort of artificial dramas or so-called “heroic plays” in rhymed verse, whose heroes were cold, unnatural creations, full of pathos and dignity. The plays of Dryden of the present era may be regarded as the fairest patterns of this new English drama, whilst Addison’s *Cato* of the succeeding marks the height of its perfection.

Comedy preserved more of its old naturalness and reality, it took its materials from the manners, frailties, and vices of society, abounding in scenes of debauchery and displaying a questionable wit in a most vigorous and shameless language.

There existed at the time two companies in London, the one patronized by the profligate King, "King's Servants", the other by the Duke of York. Dramatic writing had become a most profitable business, cultivated by the high and the low. Movable scenes were introduced and women's parts acted by females. The first character represented by a lady was that of Desdemona 1656; the name of the actress was Miss Coleman. This custom had been originated in Italy.

§ 47.

JOHN DRYDEN*, 1631—1700.

John Dryden, the head of the French school, was the son of an old wealthy family in Northamptonshire; his father, an ardent Puritan, gave him a good education, first at Westminster-school and then at the University of Cambridge, where he devoted himself in particular to the study of history.

On the death of Oliver Cromwell, the young poet composed his *Heroic Stanzas*, a warm panegyric on the Protector's reign and exploits; two years afterwards, on the restoration of the Stuarts, he likewise commemorated the event in his *Astraea Redux* (Return of Justice), praising the character of the infamous Charles II., which drew upon him a harsh and well-deserved criticism. Henceforth the whole of his life was devoted to unremitting literary activity. Dramatic writing being then the best rewarded, he resolved upon this branch of poetry, though being very little qualified for it. During the following twenty-eight years (1661—1689), he composed twenty-eight plays, consisting of tragedies, comedies, tragi-comedies, and two operas. The best of the first class are *The Rival Ladies*, *The Indian Emperor*, *Tyrannic Love*, and *The Conquest of Granada*, which like all his tragedies, are formal, unnatural productions; the principal ones of the second group are *The Spanish Friar*, *The Maiden Queen*, and *Amphitruon*, amusing but indecent. In 1667 Dryden published his *Annus Mirabilis (the Wonderful Year)*, in commemoration of the great calamities of the preceding year (1666), the Plague, the Great Fire in London, and the Dutch War, tainted, however, by base flattery

and disfiguring of facts with regard to the last. In the following year appeared his *Essay on Dramatic Poesy*, "a masterly specimen of sound and brilliant criticism" and decidedly his best production, in which he vainly attempts to vindicate rhyme for dramatic poetry, and wherein he openly declares for the French side, although he later returned to the more congenial blank-verse. After the death of Davenant in 1668, Dryden was named poet-laureate and historiographer to the King with a salary of £ 200.

His literary career was hardly ever exempt from political and literary feuds, so with the rhymsters Settle and Shadwell, and the Duke of Buckingham, who in his burlesque, *The Rehearsal*, had caricatured him on the stage; the infamous Earl of Rochester, another literary but puny adversary, whom he had offended in his *Essay on Satire*, revenged himself by having him roughly beaten by two ruffians on his leaving a coffee-house one evening. In 1681 appeared the first part of his political and powerful satire; *Absalom and Achitophel*, directed against the Duke of Monmouth and his bad advisers, all represented under biblical names. So Monmouth takes the name of Absalom, Shaftesbury that of Achitophel, Buckingham of Zimri, whilst David is intended for King Charles II. A second satire, *The Medal*, was launched against Shaftesbury alone, whilst in *Mac Flecknoe*, a literary satire, he took a terrible revenge on his rival Shadwell, to whom he assigns the first place in the realm of stupidity.

Then Dryden produced his first controversial poem, *Religio Laici*, a vigorous defence of the Anglican Church, whilst four years after, on the accession of the Catholic James II., he abandoned it for the Catholic faith, not perhaps without interested motives. In justification of his apostacy, he composed his second controversial poem, *The Allegory of the Hind and the Panther*, an insipid allegory (1687), in which the Catholic Church is compared to "a milk-white hind, immortal and unchanged" and the Protestant to a panther, "the fairest creature of the spotted kind", whilst the dissenters are introduced as bears, boars, hares, and other beasts.

Under William and Mary, Dryden lost his laureateship and income, and his pen remained his only resource. He undertook the translation of *Virgil's Aeneid* (1697), and though it must be considered as deficient in point of grace and dignity, when compared with the original, it was a most profitable undertak-

ing, yielding him about £ 1200. Thus pursuing the "sad mechanic exercise", he translated the more congenial Latin satirists *Juvenal* and *Persius* with parts of other Latin poets (1693).

Towards the sunset of his life, Dryden produced his finest, yet much overprized lyric poem: *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*, or, as it is generally called, "*Alexander's Feast*", from the leading idea: The Greek harper Timotheus excites the most heterogeneous sentiments and passions in the mind of Alexander the Great by means of varying measures and harmonies, thus celebrating the powers and triumphs of music.

During the last three years of his life, Dryden wrote his *Fables*, or rather tales, taken from Chaucer and Boccaccio, which are among his best works, though grossly stained by the hateful vice of the age. He died after a short illness of a neglected inflammation in the leg, combined with dropsy, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Dryden was of great versatility of talent and distinguished himself in almost every department of the poetic art, as a dramatist, a lyrical poet, a satirist, a philosophical poet, as a translator, and a critic. His poetical diction excels in vigour and melody of versification, and a powerful declamatory dialogue, ranking "first among those vigorous writers who have improved the poetical diction of their native tongue". The same may be said of his prose, which "is equally spirited and equally harmonious", and unsurpassed for good sense, clearness, and idiomatic energy. As an adherent and chief representative of the classic drama, the heroes of his tragedies are exaggerated to almost superhuman virtue and majesty. The frequent use of French terms was another consequence of his predilection for French models. It is, indeed, from him, the prevailing influence of French taste must be traced in English literature.

Concerning his personal character, Dryden was a calculating, egotistical time-server, fickle in his political, religious, and literary principles. Notwithstanding he rose to a sort of authority and dictatorship among his contemporaries, particularly among the play-wrights, the so-called "wits" of the time, and must be acknowledged as the first enlightened critic in English literature, which is undeniably proved by his frank avowal of the excellences of the great poets Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton.

§ 48.

CONTINUATION OF THE NEW ENGLISH DRAMA.

Thomas Otway* (1651—1685) occupies the first place in the school of Dryden, still surpassing the artificial dramas of the latter. His life and his end were equally miserable. After a good education at Winchester-school and at Oxford, he went to the stage, yet without any natural calling. Then he served as a cornet in a regiment of dragoons in Flanders, which post he soon lost through his dissipated conduct. Returning to the stage, he composed four comedies and six tragedies, of which only two have been saved from oblivion, *The Orphan* and *Venice Preserved* (1682). The latter exhibits many touches of masterly dramatic writing, and will sustain its fame as one of the most pathetic dramas in English literature. Otway is said to have met with a premature and distressful end by greedily swallowing a roll, being almost starved.

Otway's dramatic qualities lie in his touching pathos and skilful painting of the darker passions of man. His vigorous style and the occasional introduction of the comic element in his tragedies, often remind us of the great writers of the Elizabethan era, particularly of the great master Shakespeare, whose treasures inspired him and whose *Romeo and Juliet* he plagiarized in his *Caius Marius*.

Nathaniel Lee* († 1692), equally miserable as the former, not only suffering from poverty, but from fits of insanity, died in utter distress, freezing to death in a state of intoxication. He was a man of great poetical fancy and wrote eleven tragedies, of which the best known are *The Rival Queens*, *Alexander the Great* and *Theodosius*, which are distinguished for tenderness and declamatory eloquence, although written in the artificial style of the period.

William Wycherley* (1640—1715) marks the most shameful period of English literature and of the English stage in particular. Descended from an ancient and wealthy family, he was brought up in France, where he embraced catholicism; then he studied the law at the Temple and returned to the Anglican Church only to relinquish it once more under James II., who received him among the officers of his household. His later life was ignoble and miserable.

Wycherley wrote four comedies of which *The Country Wife* (1675) and the *Plain Dealer* (1677) are the most known. They are animated and elaborate in style and offer true pictures of the corrupt society of the age and of the writer's own polluted mind.

William Congreve* (1670—1729) belonged to an ancient and honourable family of Yorkshire, but passed his youth in Ireland, where he studied the law at Dublin University and later in London. He combined the capacities of a man of letters with the accomplishments of a gentleman, and enjoyed the favour and protection of the great, and of the King himself, who bestowed on him several lucrative posts, to which he finally added that of Secretary of Jamaica. Thus Congreve acquired considerable fortune, and contrary to the common lot of writers, lived in ease and comfort. Hardly twenty-three years old, he had established his literary fame by his first production, *The Old Bachelor* (1693), on which Dryden remarked that it was the best first play, which had come to his notice.

Then followed *The Double Dealer* (1694) and *Love for Love* (1695), which are his finest comedies and which secured his place as the first comic writer of his time.¹ His great superiority consists in his consummate and brilliant dialogue and his never-ceasing wit. In immorality and impurity of sentiment and language, he occupies the same level with Wycherley.

In 1697 Congreve published his only tragedy, *The Mourning Bride*, which, though composed in the lofty spirit and correct style of Dryden, is a production inferior to his comedies. It is, besides, of a moralizing tendency.

Towards the end of his life, Congreve was totally blind and afflicted with gout. He died from an injury by the upsetting of his carriage in 1729 and was honoured with a pompous public funeral and interred in Westminster-Abbey.

George Farquhar* (1678—1707) was of Irish extraction and, after an imperfect education in Dublin, embraced the profession of a player in his eighteenth year. Having unluckily wounded one of his fellow-actors in a representation, he abandoned the stage and obtained a commission in an Irish regiment, which he sold afterwards, returning to his occupation. He was of a courageous yet frivolous disposition and closed his short life in distress, suffering from ill-health and poverty, only thirty years old. During his last ten years, he produced seven plays, which are all of a gay and animated character, of skilful construction, and an easy and pointed dialogue. Farquhar marks the first step towards an improvement in morality. His best comedies are *The Beaux' Stratagem*, *The Constant Couple*, and *The Recruiting Officer*, the first of which he composed within six weeks, shortly before his end.

Sir John Vanbrugh* (1666—1729), probably of Dutch descent, was a distinguished architect,² and a successful dramatist. He rose to high favours under the House of Hanover, obtained several honourable posts, and was knighted in 1714. His comedies, the best of which are *The Relapse*, *The Confederacy*, and *The Provoked Husband* (completed by C. Cibber), are distinguished for their inexhaustible vivacity and for a higher moral tone; vice and profligacy are no longer triumphant, but defeated in the end. A reaction against the licentious morals and conversation, which characterised the Stuart restoration, began now to be reflected in the drama and literature of the day.

PROSE-LITERATURE.

§ 49.

JOHN BUNYAN*, 1628—1688.

John Bunyan, "the greatest master of allegory" was of humble origin; he was born at Elstow near Bedford, where his

¹ Dryden and Pope were among his admirers, and Voltaire paid him a visit.

² He built Greenwich Hospital, Haymarket Theatre, Blenheim Castle a. o.

father was a tinker, who brought up his son in the same trade. The boy received but a modest education, and according to his religious autobiography, "*Grace Abounding in the chief of Sinners*", his youth was riotous and vicious, which, however, seems to be rather exaggerated. When eighteen years old, he enlisted in the Parliamentary army, and in the following year he married a poor girl, whose dowry consisted of two religious books, thus both having "neither dish nor spoon betwixt them". The worst of his vicious habits seem to have been dancing and swearing. The sermon of a Baptist preacher and his subsequent reading of the Bible, created such a mighty impression upon him, that he abandoned his former wicked life and became a Baptist and an eloquent preacher among this Calvinistic sect. At the Restoration, which persecuted all Dissenters, Bunyan was arrested and committed to jail in Bedford (1660), where he remained for twelve years, yet not deprived of intercourse with his family. There he wrote his *Pilgrim's Progress**, a book which by the English is considered second only to the Bible. All his studies had been limited to the latter, and to Fox' "*Book of Martyrs*" (v. § 26, p. 48). He might have gained his liberation, if he had renounced preaching; his answer was: "If you let me out to-day, I shall preach again to-morrow". In 1672 he obtained his liberty and henceforth spent his active life in preaching to his sect in a barn near Bedford, and also frequently in the crowded churches of London. He was a man of great genius and delivered his sermons with fascinating eloquence. His character was mild, affectionate, and tolerant. Through his great influence as a sectarian leader and his popularity, he gained the name of "Bishop Bunyan". He died, as a true minister in the fulfilment of his duty, of a fever which he had caught on a journey undertaken with the view of reconciling a father to his son.

Bunyan's principal work, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, is an allegorical composition in two parts, which "narrates the struggles, the experiences, and the trials of a Christian in his passage from a life of sin to everlasting felicity". It is composed in a plain, vigorous, and idiomatic language, although not quite free from harsh and ungrammatical expressions, yet exempt from any vulgarity. Without any colourings of style, the author displays a wonderful command of language, awakening the most vivid and fascinating interest. Macaulay calls it "the only work of its kind which possesses a strong human interest".

His second work of importance is *The Holy War*, another allegory "typifying the struggle between sin and religion in the human spirit".

Bunyan is likely to remain at once the type and the most successful example of the vernacular author. Highly remarkable is the judgment of Macaulay upon this extraordinary writer: "The style of Bunyan is delightful to every reader and invaluable as a study to every person who wishes to obtain a wide command over the English language. — Bunyan is decidedly the first of allegorists, as Demosthenes is the first of orators, or Shakespeare the first of dramatists".

§ 50.

THOMAS HOBBES*, 1588—1679.

Thomas Hobbes, "the philosopher of Malmesbury", travelled in France and Italy, where he was in communication with the illustrious Descartes and Galileo, and after his return was compelled to leave again for Paris in consequence of his Royalistic principles. Here he became tutor of mathematics to the Prince of Wales. He wrote several works on politics and philosophy, by which he gave offence to religion and constitutional government, being a sceptic in religious matters and an adherent of despotic monarchy. His philosophic principles are laid down in his *Treatise on Human Nature* (1650), declaring self-interest as the "primum mobile" of all human actions, and in his more celebrated *Leviathan* (1651), in which he proclaims the necessity of an arbitrary power, not, however, by divine right, but by the free will of the people, to rule perverted mankind as the sun does the universe. In his philosophical theory he adheres to the Baconian system deriving all understanding by induction. Hobbes was the author of several other works among which there is a *Translation of Homer* in verse.

His style is correct and perspicuous, and remarkable for its logical reasoning.

§ 51.

EDWARD HYDE, EARL OF CLARENDON*, 1608—1674.

The able historiographer of the great political drama inwhich he himself played a prominent part, was descended from a gentle family, studied at Oxford, and entered upon the political career

in 1640. He was a member of the Long Parliament, but differences with the most zealous leaders of the opposition caused him to adopt the royal cause and to join the King at York. He was knighted, and when matters grew serious, accompanied the young Prince to Jersey and France, sharing his fate till the Restoration, when he earned the reward of his constancy and fidelity, being created Earl of Clarendon and Lord High Chancellor. In this high capacity, he became the ruling spirit of England's destinies for seven years. Various causes, however, contributed to hurry his downfall. The King's favour changed into dislike from a strong difference of character and of morals, and the popularity of the nation into hatred, when his daughter Anne was secretly married to the Duke of York, heir-apparent; his great magnificence and his unlucky advice to sell Dunkirk to the French, which was considered a national disgrace, drew upon him an impeachment for high treason. He fled to France, where he died at Rouen, his plaintive petition to the King for leave to die at home remaining unanswered.

The great work which will preserve his name is the *History of the Great Rebellion**, thus designating the Civil War according to his Cavalier notions. It begins with the year 1625 and closes with a consideration of the circumstances which led to the Restoration. Its value as an authentic source of trustworthy, impartial information must be rated low, owing to his partisan views and his personal remoteness from the scene of action during a great part of the eventful time. Of great excellence, however, are his portraits of great men, which he drew with a masterly spirit of precision and liveliness.

Clarendon's style is varied, and, though easy flowing, not always correct and perspicuous. Representing more the diction of an orator than of a writer, it is often entangled and negligent, setting at defiance the rules of syntax. In spite of these deficiencies, the history must be ranked with the classic works of narrative English prose.

§ 52.

THEOLOGICAL WRITERS.

Jeremy Taylor (1613—1667), who has been called "the poet among preachers", was gifted with extraordinary powers of eloquence. He gained the favour of Archbishop Laud, Prime-Minister to Charles I., of the Court, and of the King himself. Suffering many hardships during the Civil-War, he, on the Restoration, was rewarded for his loyalty with the

bishopric of Down and Connor, where he died, only fifty-four years old, the model of a Christian bishop.

Among his numerous works, the following are the best known: *On the Liberty of Prophecying* (preaching), a defence of religious toleration, especially towards the Anglican Church, then persecuted by the Puritans: *The Life of Christ, the Great Exemplar* and *On Holy Living and Dying*, his two most popular works; *The Golden Grove*, a series of meditations, and numerous *Sermons*.

Taylor's language has been compared to that of Spenser in poetry, for its magnificence, sweetness, and picturesqueness. Hallam speaks of him as of "the chief ornament of the English pulpit up to the seventeenth century".

Thomas Fuller (1608—1661), affectionately called "Worthy old Fuller", or "Quaint old Thomas Fuller", rose to the post of a preacher in London. His great moderation and the laudable aim to reconcile the two hostile factions estranged him from both parties. He remained faithful to the royal cause and, on the Restoration, was chosen chaplain to the King and created Doctor of Divinity; but he died in the next year. Two hundred ministers followed his coffin to the grave.

His fame rests upon his *Church History of Britain* (1656), but chiefly on his *Worthies of England*, published only the year after his death, in which he not only furnished interesting biographical details of eminent men, but also curious stories and observations connected with the places and circumstances in which they lived. His narrative is most fanciful and ingenious, enlivened by ever sparkling wit, great learning, and a constant cheerfulness. His Church History was condemned for its "fun and quibble" by the bigots of his time.

Sir Thomas Browne (1605—1682), perhaps the most peculiar and original prose-writer of the age, was a learned physician who wrote on the most diversified matters, from the oddest and most trifling to the most solemn and sublime, from interesting observations on natural objects and appearances to the gravest speculations on metaphysical and moral questions. The most popular are his treatises *Hydriotaphia or Urn-Burial*, on *Vulgar Errors* and *Religio Medici*, i. e. religion of a physician, all composed in a quaint, fantastic language and a desultory yet fascinating manner, without much useful knowledge or positive, profitable information.

Richard Baxter (1615—1691) presents a rare example of literary industry; for his works, theological, devotional, and controversial, amount to nearly two hundred volumes, which he composed under the most unpropitious circumstances: being of a most delicate frame and labouring under an incurable disease, he had to suffer persecution and frequent imprisonment for his faith. His works were all written in too great haste to be clear and polished, although of vigorous and passionate eloquence. They all breathe the spirit of piety and religious liberty. The two most popular are *The Saint's Everlasting Rest* and *A Call to the Unconverted*. "Baxterianism" signifies a milder form of "Calvinism", adopting the tenet of predestination without a predestined rejection of souls.

Isaac Barrow (1630—1677), the "Demosthenes of Church orators", was also a prominent mathematician, second only to Newton, who was his pupil and successor, and also a proficient Greek scholar; he occupied for a time the chairs of mathematics and Greek at the University of

Cambridge, before he turned to divinity, in which he pre-eminently signalized himself by his admirable *Sermons*. He was one of the most profound thinkers ever existing; his Sermons, elaborated with great care and taste, exhibit an unrivalled power of reasoning combined with irresistible eloquence, sublimity of thought and conception and a pregnant brevity of expression, of which the following may serve as a specimen: "A strait line is the shortest in morals as well as in geometry."

CHAPTER VIII.

§ 53.

THE CLASSIC AGE OF QUEEN ANNE*, 1688—1745.

William III.	1689—1702.	George I.	1714—1727.
Anne	1702—1714.	George II.	1727—1760.

This period, which has sometimes been honoured with the name of the "Augustan Era", is no doubt among the brightest in the annals of English history, for it spread greater freedom, enlightenment, and refinement, and a regenerating moral spirit throughout the nation. With respect to its literary character, symptoms of a salutary change were only to be observed towards its latter part.

With the accession of William of Orange, the power of the monarch and the rights of the courts of justice were regulated and limited through the "Declaration of Rights", a bill which dates the victory of constitutional government and of the Germanic principle of freedom over that of Roman absolutism, and which laid the solid foundations of England's power and greatness.¹ The complete liberty of the press, granted in 1793, was one of its natural and most beneficial consequences.

Although King William, the great champion of civil and religious liberty, was unsuccessful in his struggles against the ambitious King Louis XIV. of France, yet the pride of France was humiliated by the splendid victories of Marlborough in the turmoils of the Spanish War of Succession, and England rose to her former political power under Queen Anne, although a

¹ "We feel the pride and dignity of republicans and likewise the firmity and quiet steadiness which elsewhere appertains only to monarchy." Hallam.

slight and transitory reaction succeeded in constitutional and religious matters. Anne, bigoted and intolerant, and of no shining intellect, awakened the conflicts between the two great political parties, the *Tories*¹ and the *Whigs*² in favour of the former, whilst the High-Church kindled the spirit of hatred and destruction. The discontent of the Scottish people at the 'Treaty of Union' (1707), and the attempts of James the Pretender also served to darken the reign of this Queen.

During the reigns of the two Georges, Whiggism was the form of ruling government, which upheld the cause of liberty and of English greatness.

Neither science nor literature received any assistance or encouragement from any of the four monarchs. William felt no sympathy for the intellectual life of England; Anne was too narrow-minded, George I. too sensual, and George II. too indifferent.³ And yet it was under their reigns that science and religion received a new stir and suffered material alterations which gave fresh impulses to the civilized world.

In physical science, Isaac Newton's recent discovery of the most important law of gravitation produced a universal commotion; in philosophy, the doctrines of Locke (v. § 57), proclaiming the independency of the human mind, were cultivated and created the new school of *Moralists* or *Moral Philosophers*; in religion, a sceptical tendency, resulting from the phantastic religious absurdities and abuses of the preceding age and from the rapid advancement of learning in the present, gave rise to the cast of the so-called *Deists* or *Freethinkers* who recognized no other authority in religious matters but "human reason", and denied any revelation from without; their real founder had been Herbert, Lord of Cherbury (v. § 40) and one of their ablest adherents and defenders Henry St. John,

¹ *Tory*, an Irish word signifying a "robber or rebel". The name was first given to the opponents of the "Exclusion Bill" (1679) directed against the Duke of York, brother to Charles II. and later King James II., who was said to protect the Irish rebels. It was afterwards applied to the conservative party in opposition to the liberal or the *Whigs*.

² *Whig*, from the Scotch "*whigamore*", a horsedriver, nickname of the Scottish covenanters who sided with Cromwell and the people against the King in 1648. The name reappeared in 1680, when King Charles II. and his brother, the Duke of York, were excommunicated by the extreme republican party, who henceforth were designated by this appellation.

³ One of his frequently quoted sayings was: "I don't see any good in bainting and boetry".

Lord Bolingbroke. Yet though greatly contributing to dispel the last vestiges of the middle-ages and to free the human mind from the shackles of a fanatical hierarchy, they gained no influence on the religious life of the common people, it being too deeply imbued with the Puritan spirit and usages.

With regard to poetical literature in particular, it was a critical age. French correctness and elegance were still prevailing, valuing form above matter. Alexander Pope (v. § 54) was its elegant type in poetry, Addison (v. § 60) that in prose. The productions of poetry were chiefly of a didactic, satiric, and descriptive character, and the writers excelled in wit and intellect, devoid of enthusiasm and originality, though not altogether of sentiment and fancy, particularly towards the close of the period, when a greater vigour of thinking and genuine poetic feeling began to spring up again.

In prose, a peculiar feature manifested itself in the so-called *Humourists**¹, playful, sentimental writers, in whom intellect and sentiment were so happily blended, that while railing and scorning at the foolishness of men, they sympathized with their sufferings. Swift (v. § 59), Addison, Goldsmith (v. § 63), Smollett (v. § 71), and Sterne (v. § 72) are the best representatives of this class of writers, who added new charms and value to English prose.

To this age, besides, the rise of Prose-fiction or Novel-writing, the most popular, most precious, and mightiest branch of modern English literature, is owing; Daniel Defoe (v. § 58) was its genial creator.

In point of morality, which had sunk to its lowest ebb during the preceding period, a gradual improvement was observable since the time of the Revolution, which had exercised a salutary influence, and especially since Jeremy Collier (1689), a zealous clergyman, had attacked the profaneness and immorality of the English theatre in a fiery and energetic pamphlet,¹ and since Queen Anne had prohibited anything to be represented "contrary to religion and good manners". Then the drama, and tragedy in particular, began to moralize, whilst comedy, though not quite free from gross blemishes, attained its highest degree of perfection.

General instruction and improvement were spread by a

¹ "View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage."

new and peculiar branch of literature, the "*Moral Essays*"* which in weekly papers treated all sorts of topics concerning social and private life, customs and manners, taste and decency. Their founder was Sir Richard Steele (v. § 61), who, afterwards aided by Addison, published various serials commencing with *The Tatler* in 1709, which in 1711 was succeeded by *The Spectator*, and in 1713 temporarily supplanted by *The Guardian*, a daily paper like the former under the same direction. These essays were written with a happy mixture of seriousness and humour in the most correct and refined English prose, and exercised a wholesome influence on the morality, religion, intelligence, and the conversational language of the nation.

The first critical paper, the *Monthly Review* (1704—1713), made its appearance during this period, treating the most heterogeneous subjects of the day; it was imitated by a number of similar journals in the following era. Along with this, the foundation of newspapers at the beginning of this period was of great importance and beneficial effect with regard to the political and constitutional life, upon which a nation's welfare and security are chiefly depending. From 1688 till 1692, twenty-six newspapers started into existence.

POETICAL LITERATURE.

§ 54.

ALEXANDER POPE*, 1688—1744.

Alexander Pope, "the prince of the artificial school", was the son of a London linen-draper, who, after having acquired a competency, retired to Binfield, a beautiful spot on the banks of the Thames, where young Alexander imbibed his love for rural scenery. He was of a dwarfish size and of a deformed and weakly frame, so that his after-life was but "one long disease", but he was gifted with a melodious voice, for which he was called by his friends "the little nightingale". He may be considered as an almost entirely self-taught man, his education being very irregular; he received some private tuition and, on the whole, spent only four years and a half at schools. From his early childhood, he was passionately fond of reading poetry

especially that of Dryden, for whom he felt an unbounded admiration, and whom he also selected as a model in his poetical career which already opened in those early days. He said of himself:

“As yet a child, and all unknown to fame,
I lisped in numbers, and the numbers came.”

In his twelfth year, he composed his *Ode to Solitude*, and when sixteen years old, he published a collection of *Pastorals* or *Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter*, through which he came into notice of the most distinguished persons of the day. In the year 1709 he wrote the *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*, inferior to that of his master Dryden, whom he strove to equal, and in 1711, when only twenty two years old, the *Essay on Criticism*, a compilation of stale phrases and maxims in melodious verse. Many of its lines have passed into the language of the day. In the same year appeared the *Ode on the Messiah* and the year after (1712), the poet's finest composition, *The Rape of the Lock**, a mock-heroic poem. Its subject is but a trifle. Lord Peter had attempted to steal a lock of Miss Arabella Fermor's hair, which little harmless frolic had occasioned a breach of friendship between the two families. In 1713 appeared *Windsor Forest*, a pastoral eclogue, which had been nearly finished, when the poet was only sixteen years old. It contains exquisite yet artificial descriptions of woodland scenery.

About this time, Pope undertook the translation of Homer's *Iliad*, and after its completion, that of the *Odyssey*, which occupied a period of about twelve years, yielding him an ample profit of nearly £ 8000. These he invested in the acquisition of a beautiful villa at Twickenham, where he spent the later years of his life. The translation, though pretty faithful in sense and smooth in versification, is entirely failing in the spirit and sentiment of the original. The use of the monotonous rhymed decasyllabic instead of the majestic and solemn classic hexameter completed the disfiguration of this sublime poetry. In 1716 appeared his *Epistle from Eloise to Abelard*, the most tender and pathetic of his poetical productions, rich in beautiful imagery.

From 1727 to 1728 Pope, with the aid of some friends, composed a „*Collection of Miscellanies*”, an extensive satire on the abuses of learning and the extravagances of philosophy”, appearing under the title of *Martin Scriblerus* and of which Pope produced the poetical portion. This work drew upon its

authors the attacks of a swarm of inferior writers, on whom Pope in return vented his resentment in a mock-heroic poem, *The Dunciad*, a fierce, merciless satire, perhaps the most powerful in literature, lashing and ridiculing his puny adversaries with a pitiful want of discretion and generosity, but rescuing many a name from well-deserved oblivion. The original hero of the poem was Lewis Theobald, like him the unsuccessful publisher of an edition of Shakespeare's works, who in the second edition (1742) had to yield his post as head of the "dunces" to Colley Cibber, the poet-laureate. In this same edition, he also added a valuable sketch on the gradual decline and corruption of taste and learning in Europe.

In 1729 the versatile poet undertook a philosophical subject, *Essay on Man**, the most remarkable metaphysical poem in the English language, consisting of four epistles, in which man is considered in his relation to the universe, to himself, to society, and in his pursuits after happiness. Its fundamental ideas are: "Know thou thyself; whatever is, is right"; and "virtue alone gives happiness". It is distinguished for its melody of verse and its beautiful and felicitous illustrations.

From 1733 to 1740 Pope published his *Epistles, Satires**, and *Moral Essays*, addressed to his friends, and made up of exalted praises or "withering invectives and the fiercest denunciations", according to the nature of his feelings. He concluded his active career by his graceful *Imitations of Horace* (1737) and his *Dialogues in Verse* (1738), and died of asthma and dropsy on the 30th of May 1744; he was interred in Twickenham.

Pope was, no doubt, the most illustrious writer of the age. As to his private life, he has been severely censured by most of his biographers. His personal character was a strange mixture of irritability and malignity, of generosity and benevolence, yet the ruling passion of his life was love of fame. Many of his faults must also be attributed to the infirmity of his body and to the sensibility of his character.

As a writer, his genius was of an extraordinary versatility, chiefly excelling in didactic and satiric poetry and in the epistolary style. He was the last and greatest writer of the school of intellect or the so-called reasoning poetry, which was carried by him to its highest perfection, he himself declaring "artifice" the fundamental principle of poetry. He was no poet in the strict sense of the word, but a skilful, talented writer of smooth

verse, "not the poet of nature, but of art". Polish, refinement, and correctness were his highest aims. For this, he was not only possessed of a brilliant fancy, refined taste, and correct sense, but assisted by a felicitous expression, caustic wit, and the charming gift to adorn his inimitable verses with apt and varied pictures and a melodious cadence of language. With him his own word became a truth, that "sound shall seem an echo to sense".

§ 55.

MINOR POETS.

Matthew Prior* (1664—1721) was a politician and a man of letters, but of humble origin. He is chiefly known for his *Country Mouse and City Mouse*, a parody on Dryden's *Hind and Panther*, and conjointly composed with Montagu. As a diplomatist he possessed uncommon talents and rose to high civil posts; he was twice sent on an embassy to Versailles, but on the accession of George I, he suffered a sad reverse of fortune.

Prior has composed a few poems of some length, *Alma*, a philosophical poem, and *Solomon*, an epic poem, a quantity of light verse, and a number of *Tales* in prose, however, all tainted with the prominent vice of his age.

John Gay* (1688—1732), the friend of Pope, will ever be remembered as the author of *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), which is at the same time a political satire and an attack upon the Italian opera. It marks the origin of the English opera, by making use of English and Scotch songs instead of long recitations. The hero of the plot is a highwayman, who is condemned to be hanged, but finally pardoned. Gay wrote a dozen similar pieces, but not with the same success. An immense number of imitations started into life in the following years. Gay also composed many songs and ballads and the well-known *Fables* for the use of children. The language of his verse flows with natural ease, adorned with fresh and beautiful descriptions of nature and enlivened by a spirited raillery.

§ 56.

POETS OF TRANSITION.

James Thomson* (1700—1748), together with the two following poets, forms the connecting link between the two literary periods; in form and style, the great influence of Pope is still visible, in spirit and tendency, they belong to the succeeding era.

James Thomson was born and educated in Scotland, where his father was a minister and whence he betook himself to London to try his fortune in the branch of letters, with the

fragment of his poem *Winter** in his pocket. After some disappointments and little misfortunes, he succeeded to sell his finished poem to a bookseller for three guineas. It soon grew into public favour, and Thomson completed the whole cycle by writing *Summer*, *Spring**, and *Autumn*, thus representing a minute and enthusiastic description of the beauties and various phenomena of nature, intermingled with episodes of human occurrences and occupations. It is considered a masterpiece for its richly coloured and faithful pictures and the harmony of the language, couched in the blank-verse.

Thomson, having obtained the post of a tutor in a noble family, travelled for several years in France and Italy. Returned to England, he in succession was trusted with various offices which not only kept him from want, but enabled him to acquire a snug cottage near Richmond, where he spent his time in ease and literary occupations. He gave to the world the second of his great poems, *The Castle of Indolence*, a didactic allegory in imitation of Spenser, which, although of little interest, is superior to his *Seasons* in literary refinement; its verses in the Spenserian metre touch the ear like the sounds of dreamy music.

Thomson's dramatic productions, as *Sophonisba*, were not successful; his masque *Alfred* has become famous for having furnished the national song of "Rule Britannia". His other poems, as *Britannia* and a didactic one on *Liberty*, are of no value.

Thomson was of an indolent, kind, and generous disposition and prematurely died of a fever in his forty-eighth year.

Edward Young* (1681—1765), the son of a clergyman, first studied the law, but later, after some disappointments, took holy orders. He made himself known to the world by several poems; in 1726 appeared his *Love of Fame, or, the Universal Passion*, an artificial poem modelled on the poetry of Pope, in which he attributes every sin and vice to this only source, the love of fame.

When in 1741 Young was overwhelmed with heavy misfortunes in his family, losing all who were dearest to his heart, he became morose and melancholy and sat down to embody his despondent thoughts in his most famous poem, *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts* (1748) containing in nine songs or nights a series of the most solemn and gloomy meditations upon the sublimest subjects: the vanity of human existence, death, im-

mortality, and the comforting power of the Christian faith. It is one of the most melancholy and awful conceptions of the poetic muse.

The language in the blank-verse is of a solemn and majestic grandeur, though sometimes pompous and interspersed with numerous conceits reminding us of the poetry of the preceding age.

The poem became highly popular and was translated into most of the civilized languages; it marks a turning point in poetry and philosophy.

Allan Ramsay* (1686—1758), first a wigmaker and then a bookseller in Edinburgh, has acquired a place in literature by his pastoral poem *The Gentle Shepherd** (1725). On the thread of a simple love-story, it depicts the every day life of peasants, and the beautiful scenery of Scotland, in chaste and melodious language, interspersed with popular songs. Ramsay is also noted for his collections of *Scottish Songs*, *The Tea Table Miscellany* and *The Ever-Green*, which were intermixed with some poems of his own.

PROSE-LITERATURE.

§ 57.

JOHN LOCKE, 1632—1704.

John Locke, the founder of experimental and practical philosophy, was born at Wrington near Bristol in 1632, and was educated at Westminster-school and Christ Church, Oxford, where he attached himself to the study of physical sciences, particularly to medicine, conceiving at the same time a great dislike for the dry, scholastic method of philosophy. In consequence of his weak constitution, he, after a sojourn of thirteen years at Oxford, accepted the post of secretary to Sir Walter Vane, envoy to the court of Brandenburg. After his return, he took up his private studies at Oxford, till he was introduced to the great statesman Lord Ashley, afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury, with whom he became intimately acquainted and to whom he remained faithfully attached through all the vicissitudes of his changeful political career as Lord Chancellor and the leader of the Parliamentary opposition. He first undertook

the education of his patron's son and afterwards also that of his grandson. In order to repair his failing health, he in 1675 betook himself to Montpellier, where he enjoyed the intercourse of many distinguished French scholars and literary men. Four years afterwards, he returned to England and again united his fortune to that of his former patron, during the last agitated years of Charles II.'s reign. After his master's second disgrace, he followed him to Holland and spent four quiet years in the society of learned friends, with whom, in weekly meetings, he discussed philosophical questions. At the accession of William of Orange, Locke was called to the post of Commissioner of Appeals, but after a short time, he retired from public employment and spent his remaining four years with his friend Sir Francis Masham at Oates, where he quietly died, with the Bible in his hand, in 1704. His personal character was little short of human perfection; "he offered the most perfect type of the good man, the patriotic citizen, and the philosophical investigator".

All the numerous writings of Locke bear the stamp of usefulness and humanity. His first publication was the *Letters of Toleration* (1689), in which he derives his arguments less from Scriptural authority than from close and logical reasoning. This was followed by his *Treatise on Civil Government*, through which he proved himself the successor of Hobbes in refuting the theory of the Divine Right, for which he substitutes the common interest and supreme authority of the people.

The most important of his works, however, is his great philosophical treatise, *Essay on Human Understanding** (1690), a popular application of the inductive or experimental system of his great master Bacon. It contains an investigation into the nature of the human mind and the way by which ideas get to our consciousness, viz., by means of experience and observation based upon the faculty of sensation, which he considers the sole fountain of all human knowledge. He in consequence denies all prior notions or innate ideas. Thus establishing the perfect independence of the human mind, and refuting all theological dogmatism, he yet recognizes its affinity to the supernatural and believes in the Christian doctrine which, involving a contradiction, constitutes the weak point of his system. The book is divided into four parts, of which the third "*On the Nature and Property of Language*" is the most valuable portion in our days.

Of equal importance and influence were Locke's *Thoughts Concerning Education**, which effected a beneficial revolution in

the customary spiritless mode of training hitherto observed. Here Locke recommended and pointed out a double reform, viz. in matter and in system. As to the former, the subjects of tuition ought to be selected with respect to their practical utility, and concerning the latter, it should be more natural, humane, and reasonable. Conformably to his sense of practical usefulness, he entirely excludes the cultivation of the arts, but recommends travelling as a means of education. With him, the four great subjects of education are Virtue, Wisdom, Breeding, and Learning. Concerning his method, he condemns all formalism and mechanical training, substituting reasoning and conscientiousness in their place. No bodily chastisement is to be applied, but sensibility for honour and dishonour, for praise and blame are to be awakened and fostered in the child. The teacher should be an authority to the pupil; few laws, but strict obedience; a good example is more powerful than any teaching; the individuality of the child should be respected to avoid affectation. All education, therefore, should be individual, private teaching preferred to class training. — Equal attention should be bestowed upon bodily health and strength. The opening words of the essay are characteristic, and disclose its whole theory: "A sound mind in a sound body".

Noteworthy of Locke's other writings is his treatise *On the Reasonableness of Christianity*.

The language and style of Locke are plain and perspicuous avoiding terms of technicality and abstruse reasoning, which circumstance has no little contributed to promote the popularity and mighty influence of his works.

§ 58.

DANIEL DEFOE*, 1661—1731.

Daniel Defoe, the author of *Robinson Crusoe* and the founder of the didactic novel, was not only a very fertile writer, — he published upwards of two hundred separate works, — but one of the most deserving benefactors of the political union between England and Scotland and the founder of banks and assurances; he recommended the foundation of lunatic asylums and of people's savings-banks, as well as general education, especially that of girls, and the promotion of science. His life was full of vicissitudes; he says himself in one of his poems:

"Thirteen times have I been rich and poor."

Son of a dissenter, a wealthy butcher of London, he was educated for the ministry of his sect, which he abandoned for the sake of a mercantile life, at the same time making himself the champion of constitutional liberty and religious tolerance, which drew heavy persecution upon him. As a fugitive, he travelled in Spain, France, and Germany, and after having enjoyed the royal favour of William III., whom he had defended in his poem, *The Trueborn Englishman*, he, on the accession of Queen Anne, roused the hatred of the High-Church by his satirical pamphlet, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, in consequence of which he was pilloried, imprisoned for about two years, and heavily fined. Nothing daunted, he continued his militant career, and when still in prison, he wrote many satires, pamphlets, and political essays, and founded his *Review*, a political-literary journal, the model of Addison's *Spectator*. When released in 1704, he was successfully employed in diplomatic missions to Scotland. In 1719 appeared the first part of his famous *Robinson Crusoe**, which met with an unrivalled success. Defoe's last years were sadly clouded; for after having once more suffered imprisonment for the sake of religious freedom, he was neglected and forgotten by his country to whom he had rendered the most signal services. George I., whose succession he had ardently supported and for which he had been thrown into prison, never remembered nor rewarded him. Unkindly treated by his undutiful son and struggling with poverty, he died of grief in 1731.

Defoe chiefly excelled in works of fiction, the most accomplished of which is *Robinson Crusoe*, whose great popularity and world-wide fame lies in its simple, plain, and unaffected language, exact description and colouring of details, and in the great power of investing fiction with the force of truth and reality. It represents, as it were, the image of mankind in its growth and development. The book, to which the author added a second and a third part of an inferior and rather tedious character, was translated into almost all the languages of the world, occasioning innumerable imitations and creating a new branch of novels, that of adventurers. Its educational merits were extolled by J. J. Rousseau in his *Emile*.

Of Defoe's numerous other works are to be mentioned: *Memoirs of a Cavalier* and *The Journal of the Great Plague*, which likewise illustrate the writer's great power of fiction, even inducing men of great learning to quote them as authentic

sources. Another and perhaps the most striking instance of this capacity is his ghost-story, *The Apparition of one Mrs. Veal to her Friend*.

§ 59.

JONATHAN SWIFT*, 1667—1745.

Jonathan Swift, England's greatest wit and satirist, may safely be called the most original literary genius of his age. Born in Dublin of English parents after the death of his father, he, from his infancy, was thrown upon the charity of distant relations, and educated alternately in England and Ireland. As a student of Trinity College, Dublin, where he endured the uttermost privations, he did not addict himself to any particular branch of science and obtained his degree of B. A. (Bachelor of Arts) only with difficulty. The following eleven years, with two temporary interruptions, he spent in the house of Sir William Temple¹, who was distantly related to his mother, as his secretary, which humble position embittered his proud and ambitious character. However, he profited by this opportunity to amend his deficient studies in history, science, and poetry. Here he also became acquainted with King William III., from whom he vainly expected some preferment. After the death of his patron (1699), Swift accepted the post of a chaplain to Earl Berkely, Viceroy of Ireland, and afterwards the small vicarage of Laracor in the same country. His unusual talents for affairs and his unbridled ambition, stimulated him to enter public life as a pamphleteer, upholding the principles of domineering Whiggism, though all his actions and endeavours were guided by selfish interests. His bitter, unrelenting sarcasm and rigorous and spirited eloquence, rendered him the most formidable champion of his political party.

His first work of importance was *The Battle of Books* (1703), a satire written in support of his patron in the *Boyle and Bentley Controversy*.² The poem represents "a general

¹ Sir William Temple (1628—1699), a distinguished statesman under Charles II. and William III., yet of a timid and selfish disposition, retired from the difficulties of those turbulent and perplexed times into private life, occupying himself with gardening and "belles lettres", and composing a number of elegant Essays on various subjects yet without great depth of learning and penetration.

² This celebrated controversy arose out of another upon the comparative merits of the ancient and modern writers, in which Sir W.

engagement between the Ancients and the Moderns in a sort of parody of the Homeric battles", in which the former are victorious; it is composed in the coarsest and most contemptible language. His second satire of greater popularity and power was *The Tale of a Tub* (1704), a fierce and spirited burlesque, deriding the three Christian Churches, the Roman Catholic, the Lutheran, and the Calvinistic, which are personified by three brothers, Peter (St. Peter or the Pope), Martin (Martin Luther), and Jack (Jean Calvin). They receive from their dying father each a new coat which, according to his last will, they were to keep clean and unaltered until their dying day. With the varying fashions of the time, however, they disfigure their coats with shoulder knots, gold lace, silver fringes, and the like, each time twisting the testament in the most arbitrary manner, conformable to their interests. Peter locks up the will, wears his coat gaudy, and assumes the air of a lord; his brothers steal a copy of the will, leave the paternal house, and reform their coats, Martin cautiously, leaving some of the embroidery, Jack zealously, tearing off all the finery at once and thus injuring the vestment in a sad way. He is the worst dealt with by the satirist, while Martin (Lutheranism and Anglicanism) comparatively fares the best.

Swift, however, obtaining no advancement through the Whig party, suddenly abandoned it for the Tory side, founded a political paper, *The Examiner*, and employed his caustic wit and virulent satire in the service of his new party who caressed and flattered him, but were unable to procure him a bishopric, the object of his most ardent wishes. They at last succeeded to obtain for him the deanery of St. Patrick's in Dublin (1713). In the following year, the Tory ministry was overthrown, and Swift retired to Ireland, the object of general hatred and contempt. Racked by savage animosity and vindictiveness, he took

Temple had assigned the superiority to the former in his elegant "Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning", but greatly undervaluing the high deserts of the Moderns. He was corrected by William Wotton, a prodigy of learning, who fairly distributed the respective merits between the two. A separate discussion upon the "Epistles of Phalaris", involved in the former, divided the learned world into two camps. The question was settled by Dr. Bentley, the King's Librarian and a man of immense classic learning and admirable judgment, to his great reputation and the utter discomfiture of his adversaries. Sir William Temple's part in the controversy did not result to his credit.

up the cause of the oppressed Irish people, and in his violent pamphlets attacked the English government, especially in the famous seven *Letters, signed M. B. Drapier*, in which he exposed the fraud of having introduced bad copper coinage¹ for circulation into Ireland. They produced a general commotion throughout the two kingdoms, and raised Swift to the highest popularity in Ireland. From 1720 to 1726 appeared his greatest and most popular work of a fantastic character, *Gulliver's Travels**, which is nothing less but a "vast satire upon humanity itself". It consists of four parts, representing as many travels, the first to the *Liliputians*, a pigmy-race of six inches in height, the second to *Brobdignag*, inhabited by giants of about sixty feet, both satirizing human nothingness from a different point of view; the third to *Laputa*, the flying island of philosophers and astronomers, ridiculing the follies of learning; the fourth to the country of the *Houyhnhnms* or reasoning horses, where men, called *Yahoos*, are degraded to the vilest and most loathsome beings, which gives the clearest proof of the author's profound hatred and scorn of humanity. The great charm and popularity of this fiction is explained by the simple, serious language and the faithful and detailed narration in the style of Defoe.

In spite of his embittered, misanthropical character Swift was idolatrously loved by two young women, poetically called *Stella* and *Vanessa*, who both died of a broken heart long before him.

Towards his later years, Swift suffered severely from a giddiness in his head, which dated from an early period and which finally turned into a state of idiocy. During his last three years, he never spoke, and he is said, never to have laughed in all his life.

Swift composed an infinite number of pamphlets and satirical tracts of which those *On Polite Conversation* and *Directions to Servants* may be mentioned. He also wrote verses of a coarse but vigorous and graphic nature, as his *Rhapsody on Poetry*, and *Verses on my own Death*, which are numbered among the best.

¹ The privilege had been given to a man named Wood, at the instigation of the King's mistress, to introduce £ 180,000 worth of half-penny copper coins, the difference between their intrinsic and the normal value would be about forty per cent, which profit was to be divided between them.

Swift's fame, however, rests upon his prose, which belongs to the most idiomatic and powerful ever written. In his polemical and satirical writings, he excels in forcible reasonings, rendered most redoubtable by the ferocity of his invectives, with which he abused and overwhelmed the objects of his scorn. "His muse was indignation", and according to his own saying, he did not write "to divert but to torment the world".

§ 60.

JOSEPH ADDISON*, 1672—1719.

Joseph Addison was the son of a clergyman and educated at the Charter-house. He studied at Oxford, where he distinguished himself in conduct and fine learning, especially in Latin versification in consequence of which he obtained a scholarship at Magdalen College. At the age of twenty-two, he made himself known by some poems in praise of the poet Dryden and King William III., and attracted the attention and protection of Lord Somers, who procured him an annual pension of £ 300, which enabled him to travel for several years in France and Italy, in order to complete his classical studies and to acquaint himself with the French language. After the death of William III., he lost his pension and lived for some time in needy circumstances in London, when he was requested to celebrate in verse the recent victory of the English at Blenheim (1704). He composed his ode, *The Campaign*, which was hailed with universal applause, though being but a frigid production in imitation of Pope and the classic school. It secured to the poet a brilliant career, for he was gradually made Commissioner of Appeals, Chief Secretary of Ireland, and finally (1713) Secretary of State. Before reaching this eminence, he had joined his old friend and school-fellow, Richard Steele, as the most fertile contributor to his *Tatler*, increasing his literary activity with *The Spectator**, for which he furnished nearly one half of the essays, and later with *The Guardian*, to which he contributed about one third.

In 1713 appeared his famous tragedy *Cato**, which he had begun when still in Italy. It is the most perfect English drama composed in the correct classic style of solemn and dignified language, interspersed with some fine lyrical passages, but without any tragic conflict, passion or dramatic action. It nevertheless enjoyed an enormous popularity, and had a run of thirty-five nights on its appearance.

Addison, being of a calm and almost timid character, possessed neither eloquence nor talents for business. As a Commoner he rose but once to address the House, yet in private he is said to have developed the most brilliant conversational powers. In 1716 he married the Dowager Countess of Warwick, a haughty woman. Their connexion did not prove a happy one. Having retired from public life with the handsome pension of £ 1500, he died serenely in 1719.

Besides the above mentioned poetic works, Addison composed other poems, as *Rosamond*, a sort of musical entertainment, *Latin Poetry*, of classic elegance, and above all his *Hymns* of profound religious fervour and refined versification. However, it is his prose-writing, particularly in his *Essays*, which entitles him to a lasting fame in English literature, and which will ever be regarded as a model of pure and elegant English for its clearness, fluency, and gracefulness. The *Essays*, besides, are remarkable for the immense variety of subjects, ranging from the most trifling objects to the "loftiest principles of morality and religion", and for the felicitous manner in which they are treated, affording at the same time pleasure, instruction, and edification. *The Essay on Milton*, *The Vision of Mirza*, and *Sir Roger de Coverley's Visit to London** are among the best. Addison's writings were, like his doings, pervaded by a spirit of benevolence, good-breeding, and religious sentiment.

§ 61.

RICHARD STEELE*, 1675—1729.

Richard Steele, the founder of the Periodicals, was an Irishman and a schoolfellow of Addison in London. He studied at Oxford without taking a degree and then led a wild and disordinate life. He enlisted in the Coldstream Guards, rose to the rank of a Captain, and having gained the favourable notice of the king, received the post of a Gazetteer¹. He married a rich wife, who soon afterwards died and left him an estate in Barbadoes. By a second marriage, he added to his fortune, but leading an expensive life, he was never free from pecuniary difficulties, undergoing all sorts of troubles, embarrassments, and miseries. Yet nothing could depress the elastic gaiety of his spirits.

¹ The *Gazette* was and is the authorized government organ for the publication of Regal, Government, and Legal affairs.

Already in 1701, Steele had entered upon his literary career with a semi-religious treatise, *The Christian Hero*, which, although abounding in fine characteristic passages, met with general derision. He then tried his pen in writing comedies, which had but little success; the only dramatic triumph he gained was years after by *The Conscious Lovers* (1722). At last he turned to his more congenial calling of writing *Essays*, which he published in *The Tatler* (1709), the first English periodical deserving that name, and in which he was aided by Addison. It appeared three times a week and gained an audience of all who had any taste of wit. After about a year, it was supplanted by *The Spectator*, a daily paper in which Addison took the lead and lion-share of the work, introducing subjects of a more amusing and instructive character. Between the seventh and eighth volumes, the *Spectator* was interrupted by *The Guardian* which was, however, an inferior publication.

Then Steele entered upon his political career. He obtained a seat in Parliament, which he lost by the publication of a pamphlet, *The Crisis*, containing 'some seasonable remarks on the danger of a popish successor'. His literary zeal slackened; and when in 1714, after the death of Queen Anne, Addison was called to the ministry, and he himself intrusted with the high post of Governor of the Royal Stables and knighted by George I., he was estranged from his favourite literary occupations, but distinguished himself as an active politician and successful debater in Parliament to which he had been returned again. Here a breach of friendship ensued between him and Addison through an ardent controversy. Addison sunk into his premature grave before any reconciliation had taken place.

Although Steele held various lucrative offices, his purse was not the better for it. At last, after a stroke of paralysis, he retired to a modest seat in Wales, left him by his second wife, where, broken in health, he died in 1729. His personal character was frank, natural, easy, and good-hearted; the same qualities are reflected in the subjects and style of his writings.

Steele tried all subjects; he was a humourist, a satirist, a critic, and a story-teller. His essays operated a decided improvement in the state of society, and though they often bear the stamp of imperfection, they abound in inimitable touches. His pictures of society and characters are drawn from life with high dramatic spirit and felicitous fancy, being, besides, distinguished by an elevated conception of the female character,

which assigns him a particular and honourable place among his contemporaries.

John Arbuthnot (1667—1735), a Scotchman and physician to Queen Anne, was an accomplished scholar and one of the most brilliant wits of his time. He contributed the greater part to the collective satire *Martin Scriblerus* (v. p. 107); however, he is best remembered as the author of his fine, humorous satire *John Bull*, aimed at the Duke of Marlborough and the intrigues during the Wars of Succession. Another of his satiric writings is *The Art of Political Lying*, written in the same humorous tone as all his works, and betokening his good-natured and loveable character.

CHAPTER IX.

§ 62.

THE RETURN TO NATURE*, 1745—1800.

George II. 1727—1760. George III. 1760—1820.

This brief space of time, including the second half of the eighteenth century, is signalized by a great striving after freedom and nature in all the departments of intellectual and social life. Manifold were the causes producing the general movement which towards the end of this period found its most violent outburst in the French Revolution, preceded and kindled by the War of Independence of the North-American Colonies and spreading its seed over the greater part of Europe.

Though unsuccessful in her struggles with the North-American colonists, England continually increased her dominions in both hemispheres, and her fleet was triumphant against all her enemies, the Spanish, the Dutch, and the French. In India her power was firmly established by Warren Hastings; the Havanna, Manilla, and the Westindian islands were added to her foreign possessions; Captain James Cook undertook his three voyages round the world (1767—79), discovering new sources of commerce and wealth. Whilst these prosperous conditions originated a new science, *National Oeconomy*, founded by Adam Smith in his “*Inquiry into the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations*” (1776), pointing out labour as its fountain head, the highly agitated life in public affairs created

a new branch of literature, *Parliamentary Eloquence*, which impressed its character on the whole period, adorning it with a shining lustre. The speeches of the orators were never lost in abstract theories or general principles, but treated questions of high temporary import, as the emancipation of the North-American Colonies, the trial of Warren Hastings, the affairs of the East-India Company, the French Revolution, the abolition of slavery, and went through the scale of all human sentiments, from the coarsest personal invectives, to the highest oratorical pomp and pathos. Foremost were the following orators:

William Pitt, Earl of Chatham (1708—1778), called "*the Great Commoner*", whose politics were liberty and glory, wherefore he denounced the American policy;

Edmund Burke (1730—1797), famous for his speeches on the Impeachment of Hastings (1787), and his later apostacy from the cause of liberty: from an ardent supporter of the French Revolution, he became its most zealous antagonist in his '*Reflections on the Revolution in France*';

Sir Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751—1816), the dramatist (v. § 67), who delivered the most dazzling speech ever pronounced in the English Parliament on the occasion of the Impeachment of W. Hastings concerning the imprisonment and spoliation of the "Begums" (Princesses of Oude);

Charles Fox (1749—1800), who upheld the cause of liberty and humanity, manfully exerting his talents for the abolition of slavery;

William Pitt, the Younger (1750—1806), remarkable for his great presence of mind and easy delivery, and whose first speech marked him as a perfect orator though but twenty-one years old;

Henry Grattan (1750—1820), the chief advocate for the legislative independence of Ireland.

Political writing attained its highest degree of perfection and interest in a series of anonymous letters appearing in the *Public Advertiser* and which from one of the signatures became known as the *Letters of Junius*. They were at first directed against the abuse of illegitimate election into Parliament, which had been supported by bribery, rousing a violent conflict between the short-sighted King George III. and his ministry on the one side, and his subjects on the other. From severe and

injurious attacks on the whole ministry, they grew in importance and violence, claiming the liberty of election, a free Press and judicature, and culminating in a direct aggression upon the King himself. The printer was sentenced, but the author could not be discovered. He has now been ascertained beyond doubt in the person of one Sir Philip Francis († 1818) who had filled various high offices. The letters were 69 in number and appeared from 1769 till 1772.

As to literature in particular, a universal movement in favour of natural sentiment, simplicity, and originality, together with a great predilection and longing for the past, and a reviving love for nature and humanity manifested themselves and introduced the so-called "Romantic-School" of the coming era, exhibiting a double character: the naturalistic-philosophical, which found its most perfect expression in the "Lakists", and the national-mediaeval, whose highest representative was Walter Scott.

The following causes favoured the development of the new tendency, although it must be remarked that during the eigtheenth century few writers have been able entirely to shake off the formal customs prevailing through fashion and example.

Rise of a new poetic Doctrine. In 1750 the poet Young had published his *Conjectures on Original Composition*, in which he endeavoured to prove that nature itself ought to be imitated instead of the great poets. Quoting Shakespeare as an example, he says of him that he possessed only two books, nature and man, which he knew by heart and in his works copied their finest pages. In 1753 followed another treatise by Lowth: *On the Essence of Hebrew Poetry*, and in the same year Hogarth the painter's *Analysis of Beauty*, the essence of which he finds in the waving line; in 1756 Joseph Warton attacked the school of Pope, and Burke published his *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*; in 1769 appeared Robert Wood's *Essay on the Original Genius of Homer*, and some time later the *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* of Hugh Blair, in which he already maintained that poetry is but "the language of passion". All these works betokened the great revolution in the views on the true nature of art and poetry.

The Revival of old popular Poetry. In the year 1765, Bishop Thomas Percy published *The Reliques of*

Ancient English Poetry, a collection of Old English ballads and popular songs. They awakened a general enthusiasm for popular poetry by the simplicity of their language and their powerful passion and genuine sentiment, thus reviving the memory of an energetic and heroic age¹.

In 1794 a collection of old dramas was published by Robert Dodsley.

Of powerful influence on the growing literary taste of the present age was Macpherson's publication of *The Songs of Ossian** (1760—63), a pretended translation from the songs of an old Gaelic bard called Ossian, the son of Fingal, living in the beginning of the fourth century. Though afterwards proved a literary forgery, they excited a general commotion and enthusiasm by their enchanting, felicitous descriptions of nature, the melancholy charm of their sweet and flowing melodies, and above all by their true impassionate feeling, thus ranging with the highest flights of English poetry.

Another, but still greater phenomenon was Thomas Chatterton* (1752—1770) "the wonderful child of Bristol", who, when but a child of ten years, wrote verses of high poetic feeling, and in his sixteenth year published his great literary mystification, *The Poems of Rowley*, passed off as a translation of the works of a fictitious monk named Rowley, living in the 14th century. They bear the stamp of true poetic genius. Chatterton from utter want and noble pride committed suicide when only eighteen years old.

The Revival of Shakespeare. The chief merit in this respect is due to the great player David Garrick, who by his excellent representation of Shakespearian characters, though in a somewhat arbitrary way, re-awakened the interest for this immortal poet of nature. The great festival of the *Shakespearian Anniversary* at Stratford-on-Avon, 1769, at the instigation of Garrick was likewise of great moment in this endeavour. However, it was not before the criticisms of Lessing in Germany had directed the attention of the lettered to these imperishable masterworks of human genius that their influence was felt in poetry. John Philip Kemble, the great

¹ Their influence was felt in Germany. Bürger introduced this new branch of poetry first through imitations and then by original compositions.

actor, and Mrs. Siddons, his sister and England's greatest actress, deserve to be mentioned in this place.

Increase of Newspapers and Periodicals.* This epoch, which may also be termed the epoch of journals, magazines, and reviews, engendered two new and important branches of writing: journalism and criticism which were highly serviceable to the general spread of the new seeds of enlightenment, freedom, humanity, and naturalness. Journalism attained to its highest usefulness and efficiency, when after a long struggle (1764—1772, v. "Letters of Junius") the Press was licensed to publish and criticize the debates, acts, and measures of the King and his government. From this time since, it has become a political power and the highest tribunal which regulates the destinies of the nation, and in no little degree the intellectual and literary character of the time. In 1785 the great English news-paper, *The Times*, was founded by a printer named Walter, and was soon to become of unrivalled importance and influence not only in the affairs of Britain, but of the whole universe.

Criticism and Essayism were cultivated in monthly periodicals, the first of which, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, founded by Edward Cave in 1731, is still existing. It soon led to rival undertakings, as *The Public Ledger*, *The British Magazine* etc. in which the first literary men of the day wrote their fine essays. In 1749, *The Monthly Review* was started, the first periodical devoted exclusively to criticism. Being Whig and Low Church, it was opposed by *The Critical Review* in 1756 representing Tory and High Church views and interests. They were supplanted by *The British Critic* in 1793. One of the most valuable periodicals is *The Annual Register*, begun in 1758 and continued to this day.

Another offspring of these periodicals, which spread a general taste for literature, was the Family-novel, insinuating itself at first by a moralizing character. The rise of the middle-class and its growing importance likewise favoured the cultivation of this new branch of literature, which had already been heralded by Daniel Defoe (v. § 58).

POETICAL LITERATURE.

§ 63.

THOMAS GRAY*, 1716—1771.

Thomas Gray, the most refined of lyric poets, was brought up at Eton College, studied at Cambridge and travelled in France and Italy as tutor to Horace Walpole, from whence he returned to his university to spend his life in studious retirement. His learning was immense and varied, excelling in classic and modern languages and especially in Greek, Italian, and Scandinavian poetry. He declined the Laureateship, yet accepted the appointment of a Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, though he never discharged its functions. His personal character was somewhat fastidious and effeminate, shunning social intercourse. He died of a sudden attack of the gout in 1771 in his fifty-fifth year.

Gray's first noted production was an *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* (1747), which three years later was succeeded by his most perfect and most popular poem, *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard* (1750). It contains many lofty thoughts, expressed with exquisite grace and melodiousness of versification. Gray's finest odes are *The Bard*, *The Progress of Poesy*, and *To Adversity*. The first takes its name from a venerable Welsh bard who from the top of Snowdon fiercely denounces the tyrant Edward I, who after the conquest of Wales ordered a general massacre of the Bards, foretells the woeful events of England under his successors and finally hails her future glories under the House of Tudor.

The Fatal Sisters and *The Descent of Odin* are subjects taken from Scandinavian legends.

Gray's descriptions of nature are only poetical ornaments, or the loose canvas in which to interweave his moral reflections or solemn meditations upon human existence. His poetic muse is but of an inferior order. With a great energy and vivacity of expression, he unites a highly polished, elegant language, flowing in musical numbers of classic purity.

§ 64.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH*, 1728—1774.

Oliver Goldsmith, equally distinguished for his elegant prose and charming verse, was one of nine children of a poor Irish curate living at Pallas, county of Longford, on

a very modest income.¹ Young Oliver received his first education at the village school of Lissoy, where his family had removed, and later at several grammar-schools, till in his seventeenth year, by the help of a kind uncle, he was enabled to enter Trinity-College, Dublin, as a sizar,² distinguishing himself less for progress of learning than for irregularity of conduct, thoughtlessness, and disobedience. It was only with difficulty, he obtained his bachelor's degree (B. A.), whereupon he left the university, entering upon a life of almost uninterrupted struggles and vicissitudes. After having vainly tried various professions, he went to Edinburgh to study medicine, and eighteen months later to Leyden with the same pretence, acquiring but a superficial knowledge and gaining his bread by teaching the English language. In 1755 he set out on his great pedestrian tour through the continent, visiting Holland, France, Germany, Switzerland, and even Italy, and living on the alms of peasants, which he gained by playing the flute. Returned to England in the following year, he alternately served in different positions, as a medical practitioner to the poor, or as an assistant in a chemist's shop, as an usher in a private school, as a corrector in a printer's office, or as a writer to a bookseller, but constantly suffering from the hardships of privation and debt in consequence of his extreme improvidence and morbid generosity. He had entirely devoted himself to literary work and wrote articles for periodicals, and books for schools, thus forming his graceful and inimitable style. To this period of life belong his *Letters from a Citizen of the World*, a satiric description of English life and manners by a Chinese traveller; his gracefully narrated *History of England* and his delightful poem *The Traveller** (1764), already conceived while on his journey in Switzerland, which marks the turning point in his literary career, henceforth crowned with unintermitting success, although his private life was never exempt from embarrassments, in spite of his considerable income.

In 1766 appeared the author's most famous and popular work, *The Vicar of Wakefield**, "the first genuine novel of domestic life" which, though deficient in plot, because of its numerous improbabilities and inconsistencies, is nevertheless one

¹ "And passing rich with forty pounds a year". *Deserted Village*.

² Vide p. 51 note 1.

of the finest patterns of English novel-writing from the exquisite naturalness of its characters, its gentle humour and cheerfulness, and a flowing, harmonious language. It relates the history of an amiable, simple-minded clergyman, who during a series of domestic misfortunes is upheld by his moral courage and triumphs in the end.

In the year following appeared the writer's first comedy, *The Goodnatured Man*, a comedy of character which, however, failed by offending the over-sensitive taste of the time; about six years later, he produced his second play, *She Stoops to Conquer**, a most amusing and attractive comedy of intrigue, which still keeps the stage. Some years before this second dramatic publication, Goldsmith had given to the world the sweetest of his poems, *The Deserted Village** (1768), a vivid and touching though incoherent description of rural life, in which the figures of the clergyman and the schoolmaster are most exquisitely drawn.

Meanwhile Goldsmith had become one of the most popular poets, and lived in intimate intercourse with the most famous men of the day, as Johnson, Reynolds, Burke, Garrick, Gibbon etc. He was received as a member of the "Literary Club" and often served as the butt of sparkling wit and harmless satire, because of his great propensity for blunders and his childlike vanity. His conversational powers were very weak, though he wished to shine in society. In his *Retaliation*, a pleasant satire in the shape of delicate portraits, he revenged himself upon his literary friends.

The rest of the author's historical works, the *Histories of Rome and of Greece*, superficial compilations, and *A History of the Earth and Animated Nature*, the latter mainly a translation from Buffon, are of very moderate value and now forgotten. Goldsmith died at the early age of forty-six and was buried in the Temple Churchyard. A monument with a Latin inscription by Johnson was erected to him in Westminster Abbey.

The excellencies of Goldsmith consist in his chaste and delicate sentiment, in his gentle humour, and a refined, transparent diction.

She stoops to conquer. Mr. Hardcastle, a true-hearted English gentleman, lives with his wife, his daughter, his stepson, Tony Lumpkin, and his ward, Miss Neville, in an old-fashioned country-house. Mrs. Hardcastle, a descreet woman, but too indulgent as a mother, has thoroughly spoiled her son, who frequents bad company at an ale-house in the neigh-

bourhood. Mr. Hardcastle cherishes the idea of marrying this rare youth to Miss Neville, whose considerable fortune is locked up in the family safe. But the two young people do not share his ideas; Tony hates marriage, having his heart bestowed on some doubtful person, and Miss Neville, who regards him with aversion, is already engaged to a Mr. Hastings, a London gentleman, whom she has never seen. Another favourite idea of Mr. Hardcastle is to marry his daughter to young Marlow, the son of an old friend of his.

Suddenly Mr. Hastings, who is said to be very shy, is announced to arrive in company of his friend, young Marlow. Missing their road in the darkness, they call at the above-mentioned alehouse for informations, when Tony Lumpkin, presiding there at a convivial gathering, thinks it a good joke to send them to his father's house as a good, old-fashioned inn. Here they treat Mr. Hardcastle and his ladies in the most peremptory and impudent way, as if they were but menials; for young Marlow's timidity exists but in the presence of real ladies. In the morning, Mr. Hardcastle learns the real state of affairs from Miss Neville who has had an explication with Mr. Hastings. Marlow, who is introduced to Miss Hardcastle, behaves most awkwardly, still unaware that he is at her father's house. Then she resolves to "stoop to conquer". In the dress of a serving-maid she waits on him; his shyness departs; he even bandies jokes and finally falls deeply in love with her. Mr. Hardcastle is enraged at his visitor's behaviour; but when all on a sudden young Marlow's father appears, the deception is made clear. His son, quite horrified, intends to fly; yet in a last interview, at which, on Miss Hardcastle's contriving, both parents are secretly assisting, he confesses his love and asks for her hand. In this moment, the two fathers appear and — to young Marlow's great surprise — consent to their union. Meanwhile the courtship of Mr. Hastings has, by the help of Tony, been crowned with a happy success.

§ 65.

WILLIAM COWPER*, 1731—1800.

William Cowper, "the poet of domestic affections and religious feeling", was the son of a clergyman in Hertfordshire, and from his youth of an excessively timid and nervous disposition, which towards his later years increased to utter melancholy and a final disorder of mind. He was first educated at a boarding-school, where he bitterly suffered from the brutality of his schoolfellows, and afterwards, for seven years, at Westminster-school. Destined for the law, he entered an attorney's office, where he gained little knowledge, while leading a joyous and careless life. Being appointed to a lucrative post, he was so much frightened at the idea of appearing in public, that he broke down under a mental disease, and had to be confined in an asylum. When he was restored, he resigned active life, and withdrew into the country, where he lived in an in-

timate friendship with a clergyman's family, named Unwin, who watched over him with tender care and solicitude. He mostly spent his time in religious contemplations which from a quiet enthusiasm gradually degenerated into a sort of religious despair intermingled with hallucinations and occasional relapses into his former unhappy state of insanity. Seeking relief from his melancholy, he occupied himself with gardening and carpentering, drawing and other innocent employments.

Finally, when already advanced in years, he chose to write verse, in which he at once manifested a truly poetic genius, whose rich fountains were nature and the depth of the human heart. All his poetical works were written between 1780 and 1792, almost the only "lucid interval of his life". His first collection appeared in 1782, containing *Table Talk*, *The Progress of Error*, *Truth*, *Charity*, *Expostulation* and several other poems; it passed almost without being noticed. It was only two years later that the poet attracted universal attention and favour by his greatest poem, *The Task*^{*}, the subject of which was "the sofa", a theme proposed to him by one Mrs. Austin in order to divert his morbid mind. The work contains six books¹ of an almost universal character, treating all the various appearances of natural, social, and domestic life, and uniting the descriptive with the didactic, moral, and satirical. The language, in the shape of blank-verse, is likewise of great originality, being unaffected, true and simple as the conceptions and sentiments themselves. The next work in succession was entitled *Tirocinium*^{*}, in which the poet strongly recommends private tuition in preference to that of public schools. He also achieved a translation of Homer though almost a failure because of its harsh and rugged language.

Among the poet's minor poems, the most famous are his comic ballad *John Gilpin*^{*}, the story of which had also been told to him by Mrs. Austin, and which relates the ludicrous adventures of a simple, honest London shopkeeper on horse-back; *On Receiving my Mother's Picture*, which occurrence took place about fifty years after his mother's death when he received, from the hands of a cousin, her picture whose traits he recognized with great delight; it is one of the finest gems of English lyric; *The Castaway*, which contains the touching de-

¹ They treat of the following subjects: *The Task*, *The Time-Piece*; *The Garden*; *The Winter Evening*; *The Winter-Morning Walk*; *The Winter-Walk at Noon*.

scription of a sailor's death. Cowper also occupies the first place among English letter-writers, distinguished for sweet and delicate humour.

His last years were sadly clouded by incurable gloominess and insanity, till death released the poor sufferer in the spring of 1800. He was of an effeminate, susceptible and benevolent disposition, filled with a deep sympathy for nature and the quiet charms of domestic life. As a poet, he entirely broke down the old conventional rules of verse-making,¹ and fully re-instated nature in her legitimate rights, he being the first poet who loved nature and mankind with the pure and tender heart of a good man and a fervent poet. Both his sentiments and his language are of great naturalness and simplicity. Cowper, besides, greatly contributed by his poems towards the abolition of slavery.

§ 66.

ROBERT BURNS*, 1759—1796.

Robert Burns, Scotland's greatest poet and the true founder of English lyric, was born in 1759 of an humble peasant family in Alloway, Ayrshire. Being endowed with a bright intellect and an early inclination for poetry, he made up the defects of a primary education by industrious reading, especially of the master-pieces of English poetry, and succeeded in taking a prominent place among the highest and most popular of English bards. Brief and sad was his life, like "an April-day of sunshine and storm". Failing in the management of a farm, he resolved to go to the West-Indies, to which end he tried to gain the necessary money by publishing a collection of poems in 1786. This, at once, created his fame, and the "Ayrshire ploughman" became the hero of the fashionable literary society in Edinburgh, where he led a gay and careless life in the company of artists, poets, and philosophers. However, finding himself soon neglected, and short of the commonest necessities of life,² he returned to his previous life of a farmer, married in 1788, undertook the conduct of a new farm at Ellisland with his two brothers, but failing again, obtained the office of an exciseman, which combined onerous work with paltry pay.³ Having con-

¹ Thus he exclaims against the highly polished poetry of Pope who
"Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
And every warbler has his tune by heart."

² He was so poor that he was paying eighteen pence a week to share a bed with a notary's apprentice. * £70 per annum.

tracted habits of an irregular and intemperate life, and becoming involved in new embarrassments and debts, his health was shattered, and a fever snatched the young poet away at Dumfries, in his thirty-seventh year. His strong political radicalism, his proud independence, and the exercise of his keen powers of satire contributed not a little to the neglect he experienced in the latter years of his life.

Burns was next Shakespeare the most original and truest type of a popular poet whose lyric effusions were but the faithful echoes of nature and the genuine ebullitions of a sensitive and passionate heart. As a poet of songs, he is unrivalled in the whole range of English literature. The noble themes of his bright and fiery muse, which found "a tone for every human sentiment", were nature, patriotism, social and domestic life, and the dignity and equality of manhood. Most of his poems are lyrical and written in the Lowland Scotch dialect. In these the finest gifts of his poetic vein are brought to light: a vivid and tender feeling, striking picturesqueness, and melody of language. Such are his beautiful verses "*On Turning up a Mountain Daisy with a Plough*", and those "*On a Mouse's Nest*" on a similar occasion, both "true, wild flowers, touched with a fairy's grace". The sweet and touching lines "*To Mary in Heaven*" were addressed to his first love¹ and only written years after her death. Other exquisite lyrics are: "*A Fond Kiss and then we Part*", the finest of love-songs; "*Ye Banks and Braes*" in which love and nature are pathetically intermingled; and "*Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*", a powerful patriotic song. His manly independence finds expression in his song "*Is there for honest Poverty*" where he sings:

"The rank is but the guinea-stamp
The man's the gowd for a' that!"

The longest and best of his poems, *Tam o'Shanter*, is a narrative of a serio-comic character and Shakespearian force, treating a tale of popular superstition in which scenes of deepest pathos are effectively contrasted with others of grotesque fancy and ghastly humour. *The Cottar's Saturday Night** is a lovely descriptive poem of domestic life in the country, *Jolly Beggars*, an animated picture of the wild and merry life of the gypsies. In *Twa-Dogs** the poet balances the happiness of the rich and the poor, finding it pretty even, and pays his tribute to virtuous peasantry.

¹ Mary Campbell, his "Highland Mary".

Burns understood how to impart an interest to the most trifling objects and to blend the realities of life with lofty idealism. "No lyrics in any tongue have a more wonderful union of thrilling passion, melting tenderness, concentrated expressiveness, of language, and apt and natural poetic fancy."¹ Besides Burns must be regarded as the final liberator of English poetry from the last vestiges of artifice and classic pedantry.

§ 67.

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN*, 1751—1816.

Richard B. Sheridan, distinguished as an orator and a dramatist, was a native of Dublin, yet brought up at Harrow-school where, besides a fine and ready wit, he showed but little talent, making little progress except in extreme popularity with his school-fellows. He was taken home, and ostensibly began his studies for the bar, but instead of following this profession, he made more of a success as a wit and popular man, and successively became dramatist, Theatrical proprietor², and manager, and as a member of Parliament became one of the most splendid orators of the day, nay even of his age.

He married the daughter of a music master in Bath, a most beautiful girl and a very accomplished singer. After their marriage he did not appear in public, but took her to London, where his house became a centre of fashion in art, wit, literature, and politics.

Although deriving a large income from his theatre, his extravagance brought him into financial difficulties, and he died literally a beggar, but was buried like a prince: one duke, two earls, two lords, and one bishop held the pall.

Sheridan's brilliant speech on the impeachment of Hastings has been mentioned before (v. § 62). In his political activity he showed great patriotism and always carried his point by force of expression and racy sarcasm; his great objects were the liberty of the press and religious tolerance.

As a dramatic writer, he has produced pieces of various order. He wrote two comedies, *The Rivals*, and *The School for Scandal**, the former of which amuses by the oddities of its characters and its ludicrous situations, whilst the latter must be regarded as superior to any comedy of modern times for its

¹ Spalding, History of English Literature p. 359.

² Drurylane Theatre.

spirited and pointed dialogue. *St. Patrick's Day*, *The Critic*, and *The Rehearsal* are three farces in which the author displays his caustic wit and fine judgment. *The Duenna*, a comic-opera, was of great popularity in the writer's time. Full of high lyric beauties is his *Monody to the Memory of Garrick* (1779). Sheridan's compositions are all elaborated with great care; his main features are a pungent wit, sagacity of observation, and a fine, spirited dialogue.'

The School for Scandal. This title is given to a company of scandal-mongers whose principal business it is, under the guise of harmless conversation, to destroy the reputation of honest people. To this company of worthies belong two brothers, Joseph and Charles Surface, the wards of Sir Peter Teazle, their late father's friend, recently married to a rustic young lady, who under the guidance of those backbiters has soon become a fair member of them. In Sir Peter's estimation, Joseph is the model of an honest, virtuous young man, whereas Charles is regarded as a wild, extravagant scapegrace past retrieving. Nevertheless he has won the affection of Maria, the wealthy ward of Sir Peter, who had destined her for Joseph, whom she dislikes. This latter plays a double game: whilst wooing Maria, he is flirting with Lady Teazle, at the same time turning his guardian's suspicion on his brother by means of forged letters. Thereupon Sir Oliver Surface, the bachelor uncle of the two brothers, arrives incognito to find out the respective merits of his two nephews.

In the disguise of a money-lender he discovers Charles to be a luxurious, but good-hearted fellow, whilst Joseph does not stand his test and reveals his very character. By some accidental coincidence, Sir Peter, too, is brought to witness Joseph's false dealing against him; Lady Teazle repents of her aberrations and the wretched scandal-mongers are driven from Sir Peter's door. When at an appointed meeting, the two nephews learn their uncle's true character, Joseph retires abashed, whilst Charles is soon to be wedded to Maria. Sir Peter and his Lady live happy ever after, avoiding "the School for Scandal".

PROSE LITERATURE.

§ 68.

SAMUEL JOHNSON*, 1709—1784.

Isolated, on a prominent height, stands the eccentric yet domineering figure of Samuel Johnson, the king of letters during the greater part of the present period. His life presents a striking illustration to his own words:

"Slow rises worth by poverty oppressed."

He was the son of an humble yet intelligent bookseller and magistrate at Lichfield, Staffordshire, who, observing the boy's great facility in learning, gave him a liberal education. Being, however,

from his childhood subjected to the scrofula or "the King's evil"¹; this terrible disease not only distorted his regular features, but likewise reacted on his mind by rendering him morose and irritable. The years from sixteen to eighteen, he spent at home, storing his mind with Latin literature. Then he entered Pembroke College, Oxford, where he distinguished himself by a great command of language in his harangues to his fellow-students, and a sturdy spirit of independence; here he also produced a translation of Pope's *Messiah* into Latin verse to the great satisfaction of the author. Upon his father's failing in business, he was compelled to leave the university without any academical degree, and the next thirty years of his life present but an unbroken chain of toil and struggle with want and suffering. His misery, although it made him ever more gloomy and melancholy, served but to strengthen his principles of honesty, humanity, and self-respect.

He first accepted the post of an usher in a private school, but soon abandoned it from unfitness of person and of character. In this great perplexity for the support of his own person, he married a widowed lady, Mrs. Parker, by far his superior in age and with children older than himself, which marriage, however, turned out a very happy one. With his wife's money, he tried to set up a school, which after eighteen months he had to give up for want of pupils. He then entered upon the literary career, which was then at its lowest ebb, went to London and began by writing articles and criticisms for magazines, especially the "Gentleman's Magazine", and translations and prefaces for book-sellers. His first notable prose-work was *The Life of Savage* (1744), a contemporary of Pope, less known for his poetical abilities than for the romantic misfortunes of his private life. From 1747 till 1755 Johnson was engaged upon the most important of his literary productions, *The Dictionary of the English Language**, which at the time of its appearance was a highly valuable work and one of the greatest literary achievements, particularly interesting for its quotations from classic English authors to illustrate its accurate definitions. It has now become almost valueless in consequence of its faulty etymology. His second great work, which will for ever save his name from oblivion, is the *Lives of the Poets**, containing a series of literary portraits of the classic or artificial school. Though highly

¹ So called from its being believed to be cured by the royal touch.

interesting for fine reflection, it is not exempt from prejudiced, unsound criticisms, particularly with regard to Milton and Gray.

The author's remaining works are a tragedy, *Irene*, which is but a series of lofty declamations without interest, passion, or character; two satires, *London*, directed against the neglect of letters, and *Vanity of Human Wishes*, satirizing the futility of highly prized objects of human wishes; *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*, a didactic novel, which he composed in the space of one week to raise the expenses for his mother's burial, is less a narrative than a tedious compilation of dialogues and reflections of an austere, moral character. His *Shakespeare Edition* proved a decided failure; its preface alone is still interesting for its curious observations on dramatic poesy. Its uncontested merit, however, is the revival of Shakespeare to which it has greatly contributed.

Johnson also continued the periodical essays in his *Rambler* and *Idler* (1750—1752), yet not with the former ease and gracefulness which were substituted by a weighty style and a tone of grave morality. In his *Pamphlets* on politics, manners, criticism, industry, and agriculture, he evinces the most arbitrary doctrines in a fierce and pointed language.

In 1762 Johnson received from the government a pension of £ 300, which not only released him from his habitual want, but enabled him to indulge in the most generous benevolence. He also had founded the *Literary Club*, which united the finest spirits of the day who were grouped around his dictatorial seat. Thus from the most humble and miserable position, Johnson had risen to the highest honours in the domain of letters, where his dictates and criticisms had become dogmatic and authoritative. Excessive toil and manifold disappointments, however, conjoined to his natural melancholy, had aggravated the gloominess and irritability of his temper; and bodily infirmities, asthma and dropsy, saddened his last years; with great resignation he closed his eyes in 1784. He found an enthusiastic biographer in his friend and admirer James Boswell*, who furnished the minutest biography in the English language.

Johnson acquired his high renown in the double direction of a moralist and a critic. Whilst in the former quality he exhibited the most rigorous and even bigoted principles, he proved himself the arbiter of taste and common sense in the latter, though often biassed by the narrow doctrines of the classic school. His diction is of striking force and aptness, ever clear, sagacious, and elevated.

THE NOVELISTS.*

§ 69.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON*, 1689—1761.

Samuel Richardson, the founder of the moralizing family novel, was of humble origin. He became a printer, and through industry rose to independence, occupying the post of a 'Printer to the King'. He entered late upon his literary career, being already two and fifty years old, when he published his first novel *Pamela* (1741). This was followed by *Clarissa Harlowe* (1749) and four years later appeared his third and last, *Sir Charles Grandison*. They were all composed on the same plan, viz. in the shape of letters supposed to be written by the persons of the story.

In *Pamela*, female virtue overcomes all temptations and trials and is triumphant in the end. Pathos and tenderness are its characteristic features. *Clarissa Harlowe** is the best of Richardson's works in every regard. It contains the distressing history of a young lady who finally falls the victim of a captivating but profligate young man, Lovelace, whose name has become proverbial for an unprincipled seducer. Gloominess and mournfulness are predominant in it. The novel is spun out into eight volumes, each of 560 pages. *Sir Charles Grandison*, the weakest production of the author, was to represent the ideal of a perfect man, a summary of all moral virtues and high social accomplishments incorporated in the tedious and unsupportable Sir Charles. Richardson intended to depict the three ranks of life, the lower, the middle, and the aristocratic in the three succeeding novels; he failed only in the last for want of familiarity with high-life.

The author's great talents as a novel-writer consist in his delineation of ideal characters, especially of the female sex, and in his faithful depicting of the minutest details and incidents of private life. His tendency, however, was too ideal and moralizing, attaching a moral lesson to each of his novels. Their popularity and influence were universal,¹ putting an end to

¹ Diderot names them true dramas, and compares Richardson with Moses, Sophocles, and Euripides; Rousseau places him side by side with Homer (*Nouvelle Heloise* an imitation); Voltaire was likewise influenced by him; Klopstock corresponded with him; Gellert translated his

those artificial romances which had found their way from France into English literature.

Richardson was of a sensitive, effeminate disposition, and in later life much courted by female flatterers.

§ 70.

HENRY FIELDING*, 1707—1754.

Henry Fielding, whom Byron called "the prose Homer of human nature" was the very contrary of Richardson in every way, save his genius. He was of illustrious descent, educated at Eton, and studied at Leyden; but through the unthrifty conduct of his father, he lost his fortune and was early thrown upon his own resources. Already at the age of twenty, he wrote for the stage, but none of his numerous dramatic works have survived. At last he struck out his fine vein of the humorous novel, giving the first proof of it in his *Joseph Andrews* (1742), a spirited parody on "the fastidious morality and sentimentalism of Richardson", obtaining an instantaneous success. In his quality of a Justice of the Peace he had rich opportunities of studying human nature in the various ranks of life, particularly in the lowest, for which he felt great sympathy. In 1735 he had married an accomplished lady, but by his gay and improvident life soon scattered every penny of her dowry.

His next work, *Tom Jones**, likewise a parody, unrelentingly scourging hypocrisy, is the finest of his novels for its skilful plot and profound and acute painting of character. In *Amelia*, the author paid the tribute of homage to the virtues of his deceased wife.

Fielding's principal qualities as a writer were his fine observation and development of character, and the great talent of deducing their actions as the natural and necessary consequences from their natures. His characters, therefore, are true as life, happily blending the whims, follies, weaknesses, and vices with noble virtues and bright and lovely qualities.

Although gifted with a high intellect, Fielding's personal character was a mixture of levity and good-nature, tending rather

Pamela and *Grandison*, and became in his turn the founder of the touching family novel in Germany; Wieland dramatized *Grandison*, and Lessing was deeply indebted to him and recommended him to the German people. His *Miss Sara Sampson* and *Emilia Galotti* owe their fundamental ideas to Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa*.

to the careless life of an epicure, although he never swerved from his ideal of true humanity. Seeking relief from the ills of disordered health, he died at Lisbon in 1754 in his forty-seventh year.

S 71.

TOBIAS SMOLLETT*, 1721—1771.

Tobias Smollett was of a good Scotch family and visited the Grammar-school of Dumbarton and the University of Glasgow. He adopted the medical profession and therefore entered upon his apprenticeship in an apothecary's shop, where he only remained for a short time. When but nineteen years old, he repaired to London, the manuscript of a tragedy, *The Regicide*, in his pocket, which, however, found no admittance on the stage. Then he enlisted as a surgeon's mate on board a man-of-war, and became an eye-witness of the inglorious battle of Cartagena, and gained a thorough insight into the abuses and atrocities of naval life. After a stay in the West-Indies and an unsuccessful attempt in his profession, he turned writer, producing several satires and poems, till in 1748 he issued his *Roderick Random* which assigned to him his place among the first novel-writers. The story bears a strong resemblance to the author's own life, while presenting an accurate description of the West-Indian War, and a faithful picture of the coarseness and dissoluteness of contemporaneous society. In 1751 appeared *Peregrine Pickle*, tainted with the same faults but full of highly amusing incidents and comic situations, and in 1753 *The Adventures of Count Fathom*. He then undertook the translation of *Don Quixote*, which, like his later imitation of the same work under the title of *Sir Lancelot Greaves*, turned out failures. Thrown into prison for libel, he continued his *Critical Review*; and within the space of fourteen months composed *A Complete History of England**, which may be regarded as a continuation of the *History of Hume*. Upon the death of his young daughter, he sought distraction in travels through France and Italy, and spent his last years in a cottage near Leghorn, where he also completed the finest of his novels, *Humphrey Clinker*, the only one in the form of letters. There he died in 1771.

Smollett's novels are inferior to those of Fielding for want of a well conducted intrigue and well drawn characters. The plot is in the main but a connection of grotesque adventures

and ludicrous situations; his persons are wild and extravagant conceptions without any psychological consistency. His style is picturesque, though rather careless, excelling in beautiful descriptions and life-like pictures of scenes and accidents. Coarseness and indecency were among his chief defects.

Smollett was of a bitter and violent temper which kept him in continual agitation and discontent, leading him into many vexations and mishaps.

§ 72.

LAURENCE STERNE*, 1713—1768.

Laurence Sterne was born in Ireland, the son of an English officer. With the help of relations the talented boy studied theology at the University of Cambridge, and in 1740 obtained the rectory of Sutton and a prebend-stall at the Cathedral of York, and later another at Stillington. But his life was not a happy one, suffering constantly from debility of health and his wife's quarrelsome temper. His own character was fanciful and eccentric but amiable, pervaded by great tenderness and love of mankind. His favourite occupations were painting, music, and reading, which were twice interrupted by travels to France and Italy. He rendered his name famous by two narratives, *Tristram Shandy** and *The Sentimental Journey*. The former is not a regularly conducted story, but a collection of oddities, witty and humorous ideas and sallies. *Tristram*, the mystical hero, never appears himself; all the other characters are humorous and true to nature. With the figure of Yorrick, Sterne is said to have identified his own person. *The Sentimental Journey*, though purer in form, yet poorer in intrinsic worth, represents the adventures, impressions, and sentiments (hence the word 'sentimental'), of his journeys.

Sterne's prominent qualities were his fine humour, his tenderness of mind, pathos, and acute observation. However, he was not exempt from indecency and a morbid sentimentality. The abruptness and the eccentricities of his style, combined with a total absence of intrigue, must be also numbered among the defects of his compositions. Great praise, however, is due to him for drawing his observations from the true fountains of life, from nature, and particularly from its deepest, — the human heart.

§ 73.

HISTORICAL WRITING.

Historical writing also took part in the general progress. No longer a dry and spiritless enumeration of dates and facts, it was treated in a more philosophic and critical manner by investigating the connection between cause and effect, and by considering the general state and the various conditions of countries and their inhabitants; in short by tracing the rise and progress of civilisation among nations. This new style of writing was inaugurated by the philosopher David Hume and followed by William Robertson and Edward Gibbon.

David Hume (1711—1776) of a distinguished Scotch family, was first destined for the bar and then for the commercial line, both of which he abandoned for his predilection of literary occupation. Though he possessed but limited means, he went to France where he continued his studies, especially on metaphysics, and wrote his first philosophical treatises which passed unheeded. Returned to England, he was obliged to accept the uncongenial office of taking care of the young Marquis of Annandale, somewhat affected in mind. Then he held the post of secretary to some diplomatic missions on the continent, and finally undertook the charge of the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, although without pay, yet with an excellent collection of books at his command.

Here he undertook his great *History of England** (1754—62), the first volume of which was received with "one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation", mainly owing to the author's monarchical views and sympathy with the beheaded King. Other volumes appeared and found a more favourable reception, gradually rising to the highest popularity. Hume had become a famous man, and when requested to join an embassy to Paris, was received with marked distinction, though possessing neither outward graces nor conversational attractions. Upon his return, he was named Under-Secretary of State, which high office he held for two years, then retired with a pension of £ 1000 to a quiet and meditative life, and died at the age of sixty-five. He was of an amiable, benevolent, and candid heart, although of a sceptic and critical mind, which rendered him one of the most terrible adversaries of revealed religion.

Hume's *History of England* marks a turning point in historical literature, firstly, with regard to its philosophic treatment, which appreciates events and characters in their reciprocal concatenation and influence; secondly, with respect to its style and spirit, of which the former excels in purity and clearness, and the latter in the mild and tolerant representation of facts, slightly tinctured with traces of gentle humour.

Its main defect consists in the inaccuracy of facts, produced by a negligent and superficial consultation of original authorities, quite in discordance with the author's sceptical mind. Nor can his indifference against the common sympathies and interests of a people struggling for its liberty, be passed unnoticed.

Of Hume's philosophical treatises the chief are: *Treatise on Human Nature** (1738), in which he propounds the theory of utility, considering the latter as the main-spring of all human actions and ideas; his *Essays, moral, political, and literary** (1742), remarkable for discrimination and elegance of style, and his *Inquiry concerning Human Understanding* (1748), in which he rejects all positive religion from the impossibility of miracles, the groundwork of christianity.

William Robertson* (1721—1793), a countryman of the former and a Presbyterian minister, first living in the country and then in Edinburgh, possessed a great mastery of pulpit eloquence, to which he owed his preferment to the honorable post of Principal of the Edinburgh University. He gained a lasting literary fame by his three historical works: *History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and of King James VI.**, down to his accession to the English throne (1759); *History of the Reign of Charles V. of Germany** (1769); and *History of the Discovery of America* (1777). Upon the appearance of the first, which was received with a general applause, he was appointed Historiographer of Scotland to the King. Although not always accurate in their statements, especially with regard to the two latter works, often drawing from second-hand sources, they are highly valuable books upon some of the most interesting parts of Scotch and foreign history, outshining all former historical works in stateliness and eloquence of narration, delivered in a lucid, elaborate, and dignified language.

Some years before his death, Robertson published an *Essay on the Earlier History of India*.

Edward Gibbon* (1737—1794), the third of the great triad, descended from an ancient and wealthy London family.

Prevented by feeble health from receiving a regular education, he supplied this want by extensive reading, particularly of geographical and historical books. He passed some time at Westminster-school and fourteen months at Oxford University, where he continued his desultory studies, and finally embraced the Catholic faith. At Lausanne, where he spent one year in the house of a famous theologian, he was regained to Protestantism, at least in outward appearance. Then he passed a five years' service in the English militia, and from 1763 till 1765 travelled on the continent where in the city of Rome¹ he first conceived the idea of his gigantic historical work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Returned, he ardently set to work and presented the world with the first volume of it in 1766, which caused one universal shout of enthusiasm. After a short interval of political activity, sitting for several times as "a silent vote" in the house of Parliament, he fixed his abode at Lausanne, industriously applying himself to his extraordinary task. He died in London, where he had returned at the outbreak of the French Revolution. Gibbon possessed great accomplishments both in learning and in manners. He was of a benevolent and generous mind, though not altogether free from vanity.

His historical work is one of the noblest specimens of human industry and genius, including the great events of about thirteen centuries (180—1453 A. D.), and from its perspicuous, superior treatment, by which he brings light and order into the immense chaos of the destinies of nations and their institutions, which have given rise to modern civilisation. This solemn march of history he pictures in an equally lofty and dignified, sometimes pompous style, and with a life-like and animated description of scenes and circumstances. His views are vast and clear, and his reasonings, supported by irrefutable references and quotations, sagacious and convincing. But he has given great offence to the orthodox by his insinuating attacks upon Christianity, which he includes in the category of paganism.

Gibbon's language is the least English of all classic English writers: in vocabulary and phraseology more than one third of

¹ He himself relates of the romantic circumstances: "As I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, the idea of writing the Decline and Fall of the city first started to my mind."

its vocabulary is of French or Latin origin, whole sentences might be turned into French without altering in the least their structure.

§ 74.

EPISTOLARY WRITING.

Lady Mary Wortley Montague* (1690—1762), eldest daughter of the Duke of Kingston and of great beauty of person and a precocious intellect, received a classic education, and in 1712 was married to Mr. Edward Wortley Montague, whom she accompanied on his embassy to the court of Constantinople (1716—1718), from whence she wrote her sprightly, interesting *Letters*, descriptive of Eastern life and customs. The years from 1739 to 1761 she spent in Italy, separated from her husband by mutual consent, and directed another series of instructive and amusing letters to her daughter and friends in England. Wit and sarcasm, an almost masculine vigour combined with simple elegance and a keen observation, are the characteristics of the style and spirit of these models of epistolary composition. Their moral tone is not of "a very scrupulous delicacy".

Lady Montague was the intimate friend of almost all great writers of her time, as of Alexander Pope, whose ardent sympathy, however, turned into deadly rancour upon her sarcastic refusal of his matrimonial proposals. She also introduced the Eastern practice of inoculating children for the small-pox.

Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield* (1694—1773) was an accomplished courtier and distinguished politician, who composed a considerable number of works of which his *Letters to his Son*, published the year after his death, are the only ones which have gained popularity. They are written in an elegant and pleasant style and contain shrewd, excellent advice towards the acquisition of refined and courtly manners and accomplishments, yet betokening a very low standard of morality. According to his maxims, almost every thing might be done, if it be done in a proper manner.

CHAPTER X.

§. 75.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.*

George III. 1760—1820. William IV. 1830—1837.
George IV. 1820—1830. Victoria 1837—

The effects of the French Revolution had operated throughout the whole civilized world: freedom, enlightenment, and humanity, the noblest and loftiest aims of human striving, found a universal echo and became the passwords that ushered in the present century and rekindled the flames of poetry and learning. England, which had been less convulsed than the continent by the late commotions, offered a propitious ground for intellectual pursuits, favoured, besides, by a constant increase of material prosperity, drawn from her foreign possessions, especially from her Indian empire, and by the general spread of education. Other circumstances, as the invention of steam-printing and the repeal of the Paper-Duty and the Newspaper Stamp-Act, promoted the growth and diffusion of literature in general, facilitating besides the rapid rise and immense power of journalism, and criticism, two modern institutions. As it had been heretofore, English literature was again sensible to foreign influences. Whilst in the Elizabethan era it had taken its models and precepts from Italy, and in that of Queen Anne from France, it now received its impulses from Teutonic nations, especially from Germany and from Scandinavia, and with respect to the former not only in poetry, but more particularly in the domains of philosophy, theology, criticism, and philology. Besides, there grew up an inclination for oriental life and scenery, which furnished new themes, fresh colours, and fanciful conceptions to the poetic genius. Two distinct epochs may be observed in this period, the first, chiefly cultivating poetry and reaching down till about the year 1830, will be best designated as

The Revival of Romantic Poetry,
and the second, being especially fertile in prose, as
The Victorian Age.

I. Revival of Romantic Poetry.

The regenerating spirit of the French Revolution, „that grim protest against the conventional and the false”, was particularly felt by poetry, in which it necessarily effaced the last

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vestiges of the conventional, artificial rules and formal customs. Instead of these, realism and naturalism, two mighty powers, began to pervade the spiritual life and to signalize the character of the 19th century. The poetry of nature, that eternal fountain of truth, was restored to life again, and its simple, unalloyed charms, together with the passions of the human heart, were the themes of the new bards, and poetry became "the garb of feeling and reflection, warm from the presence of nature".

This new tendency found its most zealous promoters in the "*Lake-School*", so-called from the circumstance of the poets Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge, the triumvirate of the "*Lakists*", living and writing on the beautiful lakes of Cumberland, whose lovely rural and mountain scenery inspired many of their finest poems. The simple beauties of the various manifestations of nature, the affections and comforts of home, and the occurrences of every-day-life, formed their favourite motives and subjects, and naturalness and simplicity in sentiment, thought, and language, pervaded by the spirit of freedom and humanity, became the leading principles of their poetical effusions.

Although the first impulses of this new poetic era, with its reviving spirit of romanticism, must be traced in the preceding era, the true romantic character of the age, — romantic in opposition to the classic, — was brought to its perfection only by the works of Walter Scott in their brilliant poetic revival of the chivalrous life of the middle ages and charming descriptions of nature. *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, published by Scott in the years 1802 — 1803, exercised no little influence in this direction and prepared the public mind and taste for the future splendid series of romantic fictions, with which he was to delight the world. With Scott, therefore, the immense cultivation and influence of modern fiction, in the shape of novels, must be connected.

Along with these soft and peaceful emanations of poetry, the impassionate and troubled character of the age produced poetical works of a loftier and more aggressive and revolutionary kind, warring against tyranny, ignorance, and superstition. Byron and Shelley and in some degree Thomas Moore are the representatives of this revolutionary and regenerating poetical movement. Burns had been the mighty herald of England's new poetical springtime; Byron announces its highest efflorescence, at the same time investing it with a universal character and influence.

Dramatic Poetry failed in its attempts and, in the main, produced but dialogized lyric or epic verse, so-called book-dramas, not fit for the stage. Among the writers, who tried their skill in this most difficult domain, we find the names of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Dickens, and Bulwer-Lytton, but none succeeded. The taste for dramatic representations, especially for the great tragedies, gradually disappeared in England; Shakespeare was much neglected in his own country and found a new home in Germany. Comedy still enjoyed a certain prosperity by a natural and vivid representation of the realities of social life, without attaining, however, to the high perfection of the preceding century.

A new creation in the dramatic department was the **Melodrama**, the representation of some romantic occurrence with great pomp of decoration and scenery.

Prose-Fiction. The publication of the "*Waverley Novels*" had exercised a wholesome influence on the literary taste of the public and produced numerous imitations. Novel-writing was to become the most popular and most important branch of modern English literature, characterised by moral or reformatory tendencies and distinguished from the unhealthy works of fiction of the preceding age by a high moral tone and exact, realistic painting of scenes and characters, thus representing faithful pictures of English life and manners.

Novels of all kinds started into life and, from their prominent features, received different denominations, as the historical, the social, and the family novel, the moralizing novel, the novel of travellers etc. In most cases these appellations and distinctions must be more or less deficient from the undefined or promiscuous character of these works of fiction, whose main object is but to divert.

One of the most characteristic creations of English prose-fiction is the so-called "*Sensational Novel*", which has risen to an uncommon extent and influence, although its chief aim is only to produce mental excitement instead of pleasure.

By far the greatest number of novels, however, may be grouped under the common appellation of "*Novels of Society*" or "*Manners*", including the family-novel, the moralizing novel, the novel of high-life etc. and being generally tinctured or characterized by some social, practical, political, or religious aims or tendencies.

Essayism, appearing in literary magazines and reviews, continued to give a powerful impetus to the development of "belles lettres", acting as a sort of mediator between scientific research and popular instruction. The number of magazines was increased by *The Edinburgh Review* in 1802, founded by Sidney Smith and Francis Jeffrey, the dreaded critics of the day. In 1809 *The Quarterly Review* was started as an opponent to the former by William Gifford, upholding the conservative party. Then followed *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1817 and *The Westminster Review* in 1824. They have ever since been increasing in number and importance, and represent, as it were, the quintessence of the intellectual conditions of the nation.

POETICAL LITERATURE.

Poets of Transition.

§ 76.

GEORGE CRABBE*, 1754—1832.

"The poet of the passions of humble life" was born at the little ugly fishing-place of Aldborough, Suffolk, where his father was collector of the salt duties. The humble condition in which he was brought up, and the many distressing scenes between his parents, as well as the harsh treatment which he had to suffer from his father, early trained the intelligent young boy in the stern realities of life whose most accurate painter he was to become. Manifesting a great desire for learning, especially for botany and literature, — he gained the prize for a poem on *Hope* in a local magazine, — his father enabled him to become a surgeon and apothecary, which profession he first exercised in his native town. Not succeeding, he determined to try his fortune in London, where he arrived with little money and a few fragments of poems in his pocket. On the verge of utter loss, he at last applied to the great statesman Edmund Burke for help, who promptly assisted him with his friendship and advice. The tide of his life had turned. Burke introduced him to the great men of the day, and after the publication of his first poem, *The Library* (1781), persuaded him to enter the Church. He was ordained and became curate of his native parish,

and shortly after chaplain to the Duke of Rutland. Disliking, however, this splendid but dependent position, he preferred the quiet charms of a parish rectory in which he married, spending his life in the accomplishments of his pastoral duties and the cultivation of his favourite studies.

Two years after his first publication succeeded *The Village* (1783), which had been revised by the aged Johnson, and in which the poet struck out a new path of poetry, viz., to paint the life of the labouring classes with all their woes, weaknesses, virtues, and vices in the glaring colours of reality. The year 1785 brought his short poem *The Newspaper*. After an interval of about twenty years, the poet appeared again before the public with *The Parish Register* (1807), the most successful of his works. Then followed *The Borough* (1810), *Tales in Verse* (1812), perhaps the finest production of the poet's peculiar genius. The tales are told by two brothers, who, after a long separation, relate their respective experiences. His last works are *Sir Eustace Grey*, containing the terrible story of a madman, told by himself, and *The Hall of Justice*, another narrative full of horrors, and crimes, related by a gipsy.

Crabbe belongs to two ages: he pertains to the preceding by his refined regularity of versification, yet is more closely related to the present through his deep and passionate feeling, striking reality, and vivid picturesqueness. His chief characteristics are the marvellous truth, minuteness of detail, and the simplicity with which he works the most stirring effects. He is an acute observer and delineator of the human heart, "nature's stern painter, but the best",¹ although representing life from its most gloomy and disheartening aspect.

§ 77.

SAMUEL ROGERS*, 1763—1855.

Samuel Rogers offers the rare instance of an existence nearly approaching human perfection. Son of a London banker, he was not only favoured with a considerable fortune, but also with uncommon talents, and indefatigable activity combined with purity of morals. He received a private education which he completed at the university and by extended travels on the continent, whence he returned with the most refined tastes in

¹ Byron.

arts and literature. He then entered as a partner in his father's banking office, in which he remained till the high and venerable age of ninety-three, the friend of the great men of the age, and the generous and benevolent patron of artists and poets. For half a century his house in St. James' Place, which he had adorned with the finest and most precious pictures, was the rendezvous of genius, fashion, and celebrity.

As a poet, Rogers occupies a conspicuous place, less for originality or vigorous passion and imagination, than for the classic and graceful harmony and elaborate elegance of his verse, particularly of the blank verse, which gained him Byron's flattering appellation of „Melodious Rogers”. The most important of his poems is *The Pleasures of Memory* (1792) which, for grace of diction, must be classed with the works of the preceding age, but ranks with the best of the present era, with respect to its fresh and animated descriptions and sentiments. His other poems are *Columbus* (1812), *Jacqueline* (1814), a tender tale in the spirit of modern poetry, *Human Life* (1819), extolling the bliss of family life, and *Italy*, an excellent poem of travel, full of the finest descriptions.

§ 78.

THOMAS CAMPBELL*, 1777—1844.

Thomas Campbell was born in Glasgow and received his education at the University of his native town, where in particular he attained great proficiency in the Greek language. When hardly twenty-two years old, he rendered his name famous by *The Pleasures of Hope** (1799), a considerable, yet incoherent poem of beautiful descriptions, fine reflection, and noble, touching sentiment, though not exempt from the youthful defect of bombastic, hollow expressions. Shortly afterwards he travelled in Germany, where he continued his Greek studies under Professor Heyne in Göttingen and visited several battle-fields which inspired some of his loftiest lyrics. After his return, he married and settled near London as a professional literary writer, in 1809 publishing *Gertrude of Wyoming*, a tragic tale of Pennsylvania, in which the romantic beauties of the primeval forests of America are for the first time disclosed to our eyes. The poem is written in the Spenserian stanza. *The Pilgrim of Glencoe*, published in 1842, was a failure.

Campbell's lasting title to fame is founded upon his smaller

poems, especially on his lyrics, which belong to the finest in any language, as *Ye Mariners of England*, the most popular of his songs, *The Battle of the Baltic*, *Hohenlinden*, *The Soldier's Dream*, *The Exile of Erin*, *The Last Man*, perhaps the most impressive of his poems. *O'Connor's Child*, a poem of great passion, *Theodoric*, of exquisite purity, *Lord Ullin's Daughter*, all of an epic character, are the finest of his longer songs.

Campbell is another link between the classic and the romantic schools, partaking of the former by his delicate taste and careful finish in diction and melody, with occasional false and trite expressions and metaphors, and of the other in his glowing impetuosity, vigorous fancy, and picturesqueness.

In 1843 Campbell went to Boulogne where he died in the following year. His body was brought over to England and interred in Westminster-Abbey.

§ 79.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR*, 1775—1864.

Walter S. Landor, less distinguished as a poet than as a prose-writer, was descended from a noble and wealthy family in Warwickshire. He was educated at Rugby and studied at Oxford, where his lofty genius was entirely impregnated with the spirit of the classics. Having quitted the university without any degree, neither the army nor the bar were to his liking, till he turned to literature, producing a volume of poems in 1795. His most important poetic works are *Gebir*, which he translated himself into Latin, and *The Hellenics*, meditations conceived in the classic spirit of the ancient Greeks, with a number of smaller beautiful poems of a meditative character. He is mostly remembered for his great prose-work, *Imaginary Conversations* (1827—29), in which the great men of all ages, even of his own time, become the vehicles of his own thoughts on all possible subjects. The work is composed with great skill and originality, abounding with fine reflections and an uncommon amount of classic learning, though marred by frequent paradoxes and arbitrary opinions. Its style is pure and vigorous.

Landor also composed some *Dramas* which unite both his advantages and faults: felicitous strains of fancy intermingled with obscure and paradoxical passages. Other poetical productions are his *Heroic Idyls*, composed in Latin verse.

Having sold his patrimony, Landor passed the greater part

of his life in Italy with occasional visits to his native country. A fervent republican, and a firm advocate of justice and the natural rights of man, he vindicated the right of tyrannicide in their cause. His enthusiastic principles led him to serve in Spain as a volunteer against Napoleon, at the head of a regiment equipped at his own expence. He was of a fiery and wilful character, but of the most refined tastes and a mind of classic mould, being more of a scholar than of a poet. With him the last survivor of a by-gone age, "the Nestor of English poets", disappeared; he died at his villa near Florence in 1864.

THE LAKISTS.¹

§ 80.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH*, 1770—1850.

William Wordsworth, the poet of nature and chief of the "*Lakists*" was born at Cockermouth in Cumberland. He received a good education, first at a boarding-school in Lancashire, where his fine sense for the beauties of creation was developed by the surrounding lovely landscape scenery, and later at the University of Cambridge. Although destined for the Church, the study of the great English poets formed his favourite occupation, and after a sojourn of fifteen months at Paris, where he imbibed revolutionary principles, he renounced his ecclesiastical calling, and more eagerly cultivated poetry, giving the first proofs of his poetic genius in two small poems, *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, both in the spirit of the classic school of Pope and Dryden. A legacy of £ 900 from a deceased friend, whom he had nursed during his illness, enabled him to devote himself entirely to poetry. With his sister Dorothey he lived at various places, united in intimate friendship with the poet Coleridge with whom he made a tour to Germany and, after their return, conjointly published with him a collection of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) which at first were disdainfully rejected. In its preface he laid down his poetic principles.

Having inherited in 1802 a considerable sum which had been due to his father, the poet married Miss Mary Hutchinson,

¹ Vide p. 146.

the friend of his sister, and finally, in 1813, settled at Rydal Mount, "a cottage-like building, almost hidden by a profusion of roses and ivy", in the midst of the beautiful lakes. Here he was joined by Coleridge and Southey who followed the same peculiar views of poetry which obtained, first by contempt, the appellation of the "Lake-School of Poetry". Before this time the poet had published two new volumes of *Miscellaneous Poems* in 1807, containing many of his finest productions, among which are his first sonnets.

In 1814 Wordsworth published his longest poem, *The Excursion*, a most tiresome poem, the fragment of a vast moral epic, *The Recluse*, which was never finished. The poem may be considered as the poet's philosophical creed, expounding his religious, moral, and social doctrines by grave investigations into the highest questions concerning God, man, and nature. Of little interest in consequence of its want of poetical sentiment, dramatic life, and the improbability of the characters, — an old pedlar, a country clergyman, a recluse, a servant-maid, and some other persons of low order, — it is rich in beautiful descriptions of nature and deep feelings of sympathy with mankind, expressed in a most pathetic language. Its form is the blank-verse. In the year following appeared the second part of *The Recluse*, *The White Doe of Rylstone*, a poetic tale of very little value, the poet's only narrative. It is a mournful story, relating the complete ruin of a country family in the "Rising of the North" in 1569, and of a most fantastic character for its many mystical and supernatural incidents.

Wordsworth's next productions, *Peter Bell*, a remarkable specimen of the Lakist writing, and *The Waggoner*, were decided failures. More successful were his *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, amounting to several hundreds, although with a few exceptions but skilful prose compositions in verse. *The Prelude*, a fragment of his autobiography, was not published till after his death.

Some of his minor poems are of simple, touching beauty and unaffected grace, as *Ruth*, an impressive tale of love and madness, *The Fountain*, *The Solitary Reaper*, *To a Highland Girl*, *Lucy*, *A Portrait*, addressed to his wife, with the sweet popular beginning, "She was a phantom of delight", *Lucy Gray*, and *Laodomia* of classic elegance.

After the death of Byron and Scott, "the less thrilling notes of the Lake" found a readier ear. Wordsworth rose in public favour, and on the death of Southey in 1843, he was

appointed Poet-Laureate, which honour he held till the year 1850, when he died, eighty years old.

Wordsworth has not effected a reform in poetry, but only followed the principles and practice of the poets of the preceding age, Goldsmith, Cowper, Burns, who had pointed to nature as the eternal source of all true and original poetry. With regard to poetical diction, his best works are not in unison with his own theory running to a ridiculous extreme of simplicity, according to which the purposes of poetry might be attained "by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation". The sort of language to be selected should be the common-place talk of the lower orders, and not essentially deviating from that of prose.

The chief feature of Wordsworth's poetry is his intense delight in all shapes and peaceful appearances of nature with a colouring of pantheistical ideas, attributing even consciousness, sentiment, and pleasure to the most insignificant beings. All his poetry is pervaded by a morbid sentimentality and superficial, moralizing religiousness, devoid of passion, fancy, humour, and originality. These wants, together with an affected naïveté and simplicity, and the tedious length of most of his poems, assign to the poet but an inferior place in English poetry.

§ 81.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE*, 1772—1834.

Samuel T. Coleridge, the most original poet and thinker of his time, was born at Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire. Losing his parents at an early age, he was brought up at Christ's Hospital and then educated at Cambridge which he left in the second year, without taking any degree. All his future life was but a succession of beginnings. He enlisted in a regiment of dragoons, and after having obtained his release through the mediation of his relations, formed the bold scheme with several of his friends to found a model republic in North America, which only miscarried for want of means. Then he turned to literature and in 1796 published a small volume of poems for which he obtained thirty pounds. The year before he had married a young Lady of Bristol, Miss Sarah Fricker, and settled for three years in Somersetshire in the neighbourhood of Wordsworth, with whom he associated in intimate friendship and literary

companionship arising from a similarity of tastes and poetic principles. They travelled together in Germany, where they made a lengthened stay in order to acquaint themselves with the language and literature, and where Coleridge followed the mystical bent of his dreamy mind, applying himself with predilection to metaphysical studies, then highly cultivated in that "country of romance and learning", and from which all his works have received a trait of pantheistical sentiment. There he also translated Schiller's *Wallenstein* (1800) from the poet's manuscript with so great a perfection as nearly to equal the original. Returned to England, the two poets published their joint-collection of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), which mark the turning point to romantic poetry in England, and to which Cole-ridge's chief contribution was *The Ancient Mariner*, written in the old ballad measure, the most popular of his productions, although containing but an insipid moral. It is an old mariner's tale of a horrible vision, in which mysterious and demoniac powers of nature "blend in fantastic strife".

The Ancient Mariner. A sailor shoots an albatross, a bird which is regarded by seamen as a sign of good fortune. Atonement soon follows. Ere long, the vessel sails into a silent sea, where there is neither wind nor wave, where the water is green with decay and alive with horrible slimy and crawling things. Here the ship remains motionless; the crew are dying of thirst, when a phantom ship draws nigh with two spectres on bord, gambling for the lives of the crew. Then the vision disappears, whilst the crew, one by one, drop upon the deck, keeping a ghastly grin with their eyes fixed on the ancient mariner, who alone is spared. At length he repents. Then the angelic spirits make the dead bodies rise and attend to their former duties. The sails are hoisted, and though there is no wind, the vessel moves on, directed by a spirit underneath nine fathoms deep, until she comes to regions, where the winds speed her on to the mariner's land, where he arrives during a calm, clear night. Seraphs, all light, stand on each corse, moving their hands. A pilot arrives; but before he can approach, the ship suddenly, with a dreadful sound, sinks, leaving the sailor struggling with the waves, whence he is saved by the pilot. The memory of his agonies becomes at times unbearable to him, till he has eased his heart by telling his ghastly tale.

Having removed to the Lakes, Coleridge stayed in the house of the poet Southey, with whom he had become related through marriage, ever meditating and projecting, but scarcely ever completing, from his habitual indolence and want of energy, occasioned by his detrimental habit of opium-eating. After a two years' sojourn in Malta, where he acted as secretary to the English governor, he returned to deliver his eloquent and profound *Lectures on Shakespeare* to a London audience, and gained

the credit of being the first who fully unveiled the vast and unrivalled powers of this great genius, and completely destroyed the last lingering prejudices against this poet of poets. In 1810 Coleridge quitted his wife and children, leaving them to the care of Southey, and went to reside under the roof of a surgeon, Mr. Gilman, at Highgate near London, where the thrifless wanderer passed the last nineteen years of his life in a sort of dreamy sloth interrupted by occasional fits of activity. He died in 1834.

The most original of Coleridge's works is *Christabel* (1816), a fragmentary tale of strange witchcraft, relating the mysterious and horrible adventures of a sweet, innocent girl who is under the powerful, fiendish spell of a witch; *Love, or Geneviève* is the most complete and graceful of his poems; it is remarkable for its tenderness of feeling and harmony of language. *The Dark Ladye* is "one of the most tender and romantic love-tales ever framed". Among his lyrics, distinguished for harmonious language, the ode *On the Departing Year*, and *Hymn before Sunrise in the Valley of Chamouni*, *A Child's Evening Prayer* are the finest.

Coleridge possessed a rich and splendid genius, varied and extensive learning, and rare, conversational powers, yet no energy of action, wherefore, most of his works bear the mark of imperfection. "His literary character resembles some vast, but unfinished palace; all is gigantic, beautiful, rich, but nothing is complete, nothing compact." To his subtle sense of beauty, he united the highest powers of imagination, unrivalled precision of language, and the most exquisite melody of verse, but being too much imbued with the ideas of metaphysics, he preferred the wildest and most fantastic, unearthly subjects, thus marring the simplicity of romantic poetry.

Coleridge's prose writings on philosophic subjects have exercised no little influence on the intellectual character of his age.

§ 82.

ROBERT SOUTHEY*, 1774—1843.

Robert Southey was the son of a Bristol linen-draper and received but a desultory education. At fourteen he was sent to Westminster-school, whence he was expelled in consequence of his taking part in an article against flogging at public

schools. He went to Oxford, preparing for Orders, but spending most of his time in general reading and verse-making, rowing, and swimming. Feeling a greater inclination for the doctrines of republican liberty, then spreading from France, than for the rigorous tenets of the Church, he with Coleridge planned the bold but frustrated American scheme of founding a Pantisocracy (All-equal-government). A little volume of poems which he published in 1794 with his friend Lovell for the purpose of raising funds, yielded them "neither fame nor profit". *Joan of Arc*, another poem of the following year, earned him the sum of £ 50. Not able to support himself, he married a young lady, sister to the wife of Coleridge, on the morning of his voyage to Lisbon, where his uncle was English chaplain. After six months he returned and adopted literary writing as a profession, publishing his *Metrical Tales* in 1804, the year in which he took his abode at Greta Hall, Keswick, in the heart of the Lake-County, where he spent the remainder of his life. In spite of his talents, his zealous, unremitting industry, and the allowance of £ 160 from the government, he was constantly on the verge of poverty. When in 1813 the vacant post of a laureate had been declined by W. Scott, it was conferred upon Southey, who now from a sceptic and republican became a staunch adherent of the Anglican Church and of constitutional monarchy, for which apostacy he was bitterly scourged by Byron and his name for ever branded as that of a renegade. In 1835 his pension was raised to £ 300. After the death of his wife, he concluded a second marriage with the poetess Catharine Bowles, who tenderly watched his declining years, the last three of which he spent in a state of vacancy of mind, thus, "like the oak, beginning to die at the top"; his death occurred in 1843.

Southey was one of the most fertile writers ever existing, the number of volumes containing his works amounting to 109, besides about 150 articles scattered through various reviews, which give evidence of his rare and varied learning. In spite of this immense fertility, he must be considered as the most insignificant of the Lakists. The most important of his poetic works are *Thalaba, the Destroyer*, *Madoc*, *The Curse of Kehama*, and *Roderick, the Last of the Goths*. The form of verse is irregular without rhyme, and exercises a peculiar charm by its rhythmical harmony. The oriental colourings, with which the poems are overcharged, are but of an artificial make.

Thalaba the Destroyer (1801), a tale of Arabian enchantment, depicts in irregular blank-verse the perilous adventures and ultimate triumph of an Arabian hero who fights and conquers the dark powers of evil. It abounds in brilliant painting, although of an incoherent, unearthly character.

Madoc (1805) contains the fabulous story of the discovery of America and the conversion of the Mexicans by a Welsh prince of the twelfth century. It is written in blank-verse and abounds in exaggerated colourings of description and sentiment.

The Curse of Kehama (1810) is a tale of Hindoo mythology and superstition. Though exhibiting high proofs of fancy and imagination, its supernatural character removes it too far from human sympathies and interests.

Kehama, a Hindoo rajah (prince), is burdened by a terrible spell, and through penance and self-inflicted torture raises himself to a level with Brahma and Vishnu. After a long tyranny, he goes to Hell, to claim dominion there. He drinks of the draught of immortality of death, prepared for the wicked, and is forced to bend his head beneath the infernal throne to become its fourth supporter.

Roderick, the Last of the Goths, a heroic poem, relates the punishment and repentance of the last Gothic king and the downfall of the Gothic power through the invasion of the Arabs. It has more of a real character than the former.

His *Ballads*, strongly tintured with mystical sentiments, belong to the best in literature. *Lord William*; *Mary, the Maid of the Inn*; *The Old Woman of Berkeley*, are the most powerful among them. His laureate ode, *The Vision of Judgment*, was not only a failure for its retrograde and controversial principles and abject flattery towards George III., but also because of its attempt to revive the classic hexameter. It was exposed to universal ridicule by Byron in his terribly sarcastic poem of the same appellation.

Southey's prose works are very numerous and valuable on account of their style and learning. Among them, *The Life of Nelson*, is considered a masterpiece of its kind. He also composed the *Lives of Wesley, Cowper, Chatterton*, and others. The author's historic writings, *A History of Brazil* and one of *The Peninsular War*, are valued for their plastic representation.

The language and style of Southey are clear, vigorous, and unaffected English; his poetry is much like prose.

Like Coleridge, Southey was of a fantastic mind, and in his later writings inspired by a sort of religious enthusiasm. "The tone of his poems, in general, is too uniformly ecstatic

and agonizing. His personages, like his scenes, have something unreal, phantom-like, dreamy: they are often beautiful, but it is the beauty not of the earth, or even of the clouds, but of the mirage and the Fata Morgana."¹

§ 83.

SIR WALTER SCOTT*, 1771—1832.

Sir Walter Scott, the poet of chivalry and romance, deserves the name of the founder of national romance. He was the son of an esteemed writer to the Signet² in Edinburgh; both his parents were descended from those ancient Border families, whose chivalric exploits he was to immortalize, and related to the Duke of Buccleuch. Being afflicted with an infirmity in his right leg, he spent several years in the country at his grandfather's farm near Kelso where, surrounded by relics of antiquarian interest and fine rural scenery, he imbibed his great love of nature and antiquity and that sense of romance which distinguishes all his works. No remarkable talents, however, signalized the future genius, either at the Highschool or at the University of Edinburgh. Besides a marked propensity for story-telling and miscellaneous reading, especially of the works of Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, and of Percy's Reliques of English Poetry, the study of history, of Latin, and of several modern languages, particularly of the German, in which he was well versed, formed his favourite occupations. A taste for German literature having become fashionable at the time among the educated classes of Edinburgh, Scott took an active part in those pursuits by translating several German poems, as Bürger's *Lenore*, *The Wild Huntsman*, and some time after Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen* into English. These first literary productions appeared in the year 1796.

Although Scott had been educated for the profession of the bar, he soon found his proper calling in the domain of letters and prominently in that of fiction. Having married a young lady of French parentage, Charlotte Charpentier (1797), he abandoned the law and settled at a quiet cottage of Lasswade, where he devoted himself to literary labours. Notwith-

¹ Shaw, English Literature p. 473.

² One of a class of lawyers in Scotland, equivalent to the highest class of attorneys in England; they are also called "clerk to the signet".

standing he, two years later, was appointed Sheriff of Selkirkshire, poetically called the „Ettrick-Forest”, where he spent much of his leisure in making frequent excursions into the picturesque regions of the Border districts, — his “raids into Liddesdale”, as he called them, — collecting those ancient legends, romances, and ballads, which he published in 1802—1803 with some of his own original poems under the title of *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border**. The great learning and fine taste which he displayed in this collection established his reputation.

In 1804 Scott removed to a little farm at Ashstiel on the Tweed, where he stayed for nearly eight years and produced the greater part of his enchanting *Romances** which filled the world with enthusiasm and delight, and which for all times have shed a shining lustre on Scottish highland scenery. The first of them,

*The Lay of the Last Minstrel**, appearing in 1805, raised the poet to the first rank of British bards and quite “revolutionized the public taste”. It exhibits a vivid picture of the violent and lawless life of border chivalry, mitigated by heroic valour, faith, and magnanimity.

Before the Duchess of Monmouth the old Minstrel sings his lay, a tale of the joys, griefs, and exploits of her ancestors, the powerful Buccleuchs, picturing in glowing colours their free, wild border-life. The chieftain of Branksome is fallen in a private feud in the streets of Dun-Edin (Edinburgh) against Cranstoun, who has been secretly betrothed to Margaret, his daughter. Whilst she mourns her double loss, her mother broods bloody revenge at the bier of her lord. Suddenly the wild slogan of the Southern oversounds all this woe. They claim from the Lady of Branksome one Deloraine, a kinsman of hers, who has made a bloody foray into Cumberland. Besides, the castle shall receive an English garrison, else they threaten to storm the tower and to retain captive the young heir of Branksome who has fallen into their hands. But the Lady does not flinch. When the storm draws near, the Scotch border-army, thrice superior, advances. Then the beleaguerers propose a single fight between Deloraine and the injured Musgrave of Cumberland. The Scotch consent; but Deloraine has been severely wounded in yesterday's encounter. However help is near at hand. The combat takes place, and Musgrave falls. The conqueror opens his beaver — it is Cranstoun, their deadly foe. Aided by Margaret, he has penetrated into the tower, has taken the armour of the sick, slumbering Deloraine, and fought for Branksome's sake. Pride and revenge are quelled, love and valour carry the fair prize. The Last Minstrel's pilgrimage is ended: in a hut, surrounded by a little garden, the gifts of the Duchess of Buccleuch, he ends his peaceful days.

In 1808 followed *Marmion**, Scott's most considerable

poetical production, offering another gloomy picture of the feudal times, their horrid customs and immoral institutions.

Lord Marmion, minion of King Henry VIII. is wooing Lady Clare, a wealthy heiress, who is betrothed to a knight, called Wilton. In order to remove him, Marmion accuses him, by dint of forged letters, of high treason, and conquers him in single combat. Wilton, recovering from his wound, goes abroad to hide his shame, whilst his faithful bride takes refuge within a convent. Notwithstanding Marmion does not desist from his design. A nun, ravished by him, Constance de Beverley, who in hatred of Clare has written those letters, tries to despatch her by poison. She fails, is discovered, and, abandoned by her seducer, is immured in the cloister. Marmion, unaware of her dreadful lot, is sent as an ambassador to James IV., who is preparing for war with England. On his road, a pilgrim joins his train: it is Wilton, but unknown to all. In the meantime, Clare and her Abbess fall into the hands of the Scotchmen, and as prisoners are joined to Marmion's train. Soon the Abbess finds an opportunity to hand over to the pilgrim letters delivered by Constance before her death and proving Marmion's crime and Wilton's innocence. He reveals himself to the Earl of Douglas, who in secret reknights him. Afterwards he joins the approaching English army, whither Marmion and Clare set out too. They arrive in the moment of the opening of the battle of Flodden-Field. Marmion rushes to the combat and bravely fighting falls; Wilton, to whose valour the victory is mainly owing, clears himself before the king and is rewarded with the hand of Clare.

Two years after, 1810, appeared *The Lady of the Lake*, painting the wild life of the old Scotch Highlanders, their ancient rites and customs, and their fervent love of home and freedom, on the back-ground of a lovely and picturesque landscape scenery.

King James V. has lost his train in hunting a noble stag in the Trosachs near Loch Katrine. The stag escapes, his gallant steed exhausted falls. On winding his bugle, a graceful damsel, clad in the highland garb, appears in a little skiff and takes him to a rocky isle, where his arrival, though himself unknown, had been foretold by the old minstrel Allan Bane, gifted with second sight. Next morning he leaves his hosts, Ellen, the "Lady of the Lake", daughter to the exiled Douglas, and the mother of Roderick Dhu, an outlaw, now "The Saxon scourge, Clan-Alpine's pride", with whom the Douglas family had found a refuge. Roderick expects his reward in the hand of Ellen, who loves young Malcolm Graeme, a young rebellious Scotch lord, to whom Roderick vows a deadly hatred. In his wrath, he rouses his clan to war against the king; the "fiery cross" is sped across the mountains, the clansmen gather; all the women are sheltered in the lonely isle. Old Douglas and his daughter have withdrawn to a sequestered cave on Mount Benvenue. James, in search of Ellen, again wanders through the mountains, finds her and urges a ring upon her, which would grant her any favour or suit with the king. After having killed his guide, a treacherous clansman, who had aimed at his life, he strays about, when he chances upon a mountaineer before his watch-fire, who offers him cheer and shelter for the night. In the morning, his host leads him out of the Highlands; it is

his dreadful foe, Roderick Dhu. Having reached the plain, they join in deadly strife in which Roderick is overcome and, mortally wounded, taken to Sterling castle where he dies. There old Douglas has arrived to win back the royal favour, but through mishap is cast into prison, while Malcolm Graeme already suffers the same fate. On the following morning, Ellen arrives with old Allan Bane to try the powers of the ring, when she is led by her unknown guest into the royal hall, where, to her great surprise, she learns him to be the King, her father reinstated in all his former honours, and Malcolm to be linked to her for ever.

Rokeby (1813) describes the struggle between the Cavaliers and the Roundheads. The scene is Yorkshire with its luxuriant meadows, leafy woods, rugged rocks, and calm and shady streamlets.

Oswald, an avaricious knave, strives to become heir to his wealthy kinsman and friend Mortham whose soul he poisons with suspicions against his beloved lady, married in secret against her father's will. Blinded with jealousy, Mortham kills her in the arms of her brother, who had come to announce their father's forgiveness. Then loaded with remorse, he goes abroad to lead a restless life, being, besides, bereft of Redmond, his only son, by his dead wife's father. Oswald starts to take possession of the heritage and tries to defraud Bertram, his vile and daring instrument, of his wages, and to ruin him. Hoping to profit by the troubled state of things in the civil war, he sides with the conquering faction, gets his good neighbour, Lord Rokeby, and Redmond, who both had been made prisoners at Marston-Moor, into his power and threatens them with ignominious death for a feigned crime of treason, in order to force from them and Rokeby's only daughter and heiress Mathilda, who is secretly engaged to Redmond, the consent to her being married to Wilfrid, his only son. But Wilfrid himself, seeing his ardent love unrequited, spurns at this idea and dies of a broken heart at her feet. Oswald, unmoved, commands the death of the two lords, when Bertram, suddenly appearing, rushes upon him and sends his dark soul to hell, he himself falling under the strokes of Oswald's soldiers. Shortly after, Mortham, who had returned to his country, appears and embraces his son who is soon to be joined to Mathilda.

The Lord of the Isles (1814), the last of W. Scott's greater romances, leads us to the rocky and barren shores of Ayrshire with the vast ocean in the back-ground. It revives Scotland's heroic age, the times of the Wallace and the Bruce.

Caledonia is under the English yoke, Wallace and his followers dead, Robert Bruce, the rightful king, roving abroad, an outlaw. With a few companions and one little ship, he lands at the last point of the Highlands, and unknown enters Artonish-Hall, the castle of Ronald, "Lord of the Isles". There the chieftains of the surrounding clans happen to be assembled for a bridal-feast; Bruce is discovered among them. A great uproar arises, when the prophetic voice of an abbot blesses him as their lawful king. Most of them bend their knees, the war-cry flies through the whole north-west, Bruce gathers a little army and by art and bold onset gains ground on the overpowering army. Happily King Edward I. dies, and Bruce succeeds in delivering Scotland from her foes. By the

great victory won at Bannockburn (1313), he, for ever, assures his right to the throne and the liberty of his country.

The Bridal of Triermain, a fairy tale, and *The Vision of Don Roderick*, a glorification of Wellington's deeds in Spain, are only of an inferior order.

The first three romances are superior to the rest. According to the poet's own judgment, the *Lay* excels in style, *Marmion* in description, and *The Lady of the Lake* in its incidents. The verse flows in the easy octosyllabic rhyme, frequently interspersed with varying measures to avoid tediousness. These beautiful and original poems exercised a great charm by the picturesqueness and freshness of description, both of incidents and scenery, by the poetic fancy, which imparts life and reality to shadows of the past, and by their harmonious, animated versification.

Meanwhile, in 1812, Scott had taken his new abode at Abbotsford near Melrose Abbey, and likewise situated on his beloved Tweed. In the year after, he respectfully declined the laureateship offered to him by the Prince Regent. While engaged in his poetic productions, the laborious writer had published his *Life and Works of Dryden* (1808) in eighteen volumes; another toilsome undertaking was the edition of the *Life and Works of Dean Swift*.

About this time, Scott's literary activity took a new direction. Byron's brilliant sun had risen above the poetical horizon of England, putting into shade even the most favourite poets. W. Scott was among them, and his popularity nearly on the decline, when he struck out the fresh path of historic novel-writing, in which he was to remain unrivalled.

In July 1814 appeared his novel *Waverley**, or 'tis *Sixty Years Since*,¹ which, although published anonymously², obtained an immediate and extraordinary success.³ It is a tale of Edward the Pretender's invasion and of the Scotch Rebellion in 1745, interspersed with highly finished pictures of wild Highland life and scenery. During the space of seventeen years, (1814 till 1831), a rich collection of twenty-nine separate novels, generally known under the common appellation of *Waverley-Novels*, were

¹ Those novels marked with * are in the Tauchnitz Collection.

² It was only many years afterwards, in 1827, at a private dinner in Edinburgh, that W. Scott cleared up the transparent mystery and owned himself the author of the *Waverley-Novels*.

³ In 1822, 145 000 volumes were printed.

poured forth with incredible rapidity. In the next year, he published *Guy Mannering**, another novel depicting Scotch life, yet totally unconnected with history. Then followed a series of novels related to Scotch history and designed to illustrate Scotch life and customs at different important periods of her annals. They are *The Antiquary**, *Rob Roy**, *Tales of my Landlord*, the last comprising three series including *The Black Dwarf**, *Old Mortality**, *The Heart of Midlothian**, *The Bride of Lammermoor** and *The Legend of Montrose**. To this group of Scotch history belong *The Monastery**, *The Abbot**, *The Fair Maid of Perth**, and *Castle Dangerous*.

Then Scott turned to English history and produced *Ivanhoe**, the most magnificent historical novel exhibiting a dazzling picture of the early feudal times with the chivalrous King Richard the Lion-hearted in its centre, surrounded by courtly splendours, tournaments, and festivals, and contrasted by the dark shadows of superstition, treachery, and religious persecution. It is, besides, adorned with the bright figure of the noble-minded Jewess Rebecca, Scott's finest female character. This was followed by *Kenilworth**, an equally attractive picture of the age of the "Lion-Queen" Elizabeth and her splendid court. It contains another lovely and touching figure, that of the beautiful and unfortunate Amy Robsart, the mistress and the victim of the brilliant Lord Leicester. To this class belong *The Fortunes of Nigel**, *Peveril of the Peak**, *The Betrothed*, *The Talisman*, and *Woodstock*.

Related to continental history are *Quentin Durward**, *Anne of Geierstein**, and *Count Robert of Paris*. The rest of W. Scott's novels, depicting private life without any reference to history, by which he has likewise become the founder of the modern novel of society, are *The Pirate**, *St. Ronan's Well*, *Redgauntlet*, *The Surgeon's Daughter*, *The Two Drovers*, and *The Highland Widow*.

Yet these numerous productions were not the only proofs of the author's prodigious industry during this time; for besides the *Life and Works of Swift*, he published *The Life of Napoleon*, an inferior production, *The Tales of a Grandfather**, and the amusing *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, and various essays and reviews.

Through this immense and wonderful activity, W. Scott not only increased his fame and popularity, but gained considerable wealth which enabled him to realize his long-cherished

desire to become a "Border Laird", "doing the honours of all Scotland". He enlarged and embellished his new seat of Abbotsford "into a Gothic romance in stone and lime" and exercised "a princely hospitality", welcoming crowds of distinguished strangers attracted by his fame. His time was well divided between his official duties, literary occupations, out-door sports, and social entertainments. Being an early riser, he had done the main part of his daily work already by nine or ten o'clock in the morning, "broken the neck of his day's work", as he expressed it. In 1820 W. Scott had been raised to the rank of a baronet.

While this sunshine of prosperity brightened the poet's life, it suddenly received a fatal blow, from which it never recovered again. It was in 1826, when the publishing firm of the Ballantynes, whose partner he had been since 1805, became bankrupt and W. Scott liable for the gigantic sum of £ 117 000. Refusing all advantages of arrangement, he in his fifty-fifth year determined to devote his remaining days to the immense task of paying his debts in full. He gave up his former mode of life, together with his dear Abbotsford, withdrew to small lodgings in Edinburgh and incessantly laboured to redeem his honour. Within six years he had nearly cleared this enormous sum, when his health gave way in the heroic struggle; a stroke of paralysis in 1830 announced his approaching end. A lengthened stay in Malta and Italy brought no relief; he returned home to die at his beloved Abbotsford, which by general subscription, had been restored to his family. He once more attempted to write, but the pen dropped from his hand and the noble poet hopelessly sank back, a broken reed, into his chair. He closed his eyes in death on the 21st of September 1832, surrounded by all his children.

Walter Scott's character was adorned with the brightest qualities: kind and generous, honest and noble-minded, he possessed hardly an enemy. "He was emphatically a great and a good man, an honour to his age, to his country, and to human nature."¹

His high renown is chiefly founded on his works of fiction, particularly on his historical novels, those extraordinary productions of an inexhaustible imagination, through which "Scottish history and soil have been invested with a new lustre". The

¹ Shaw, History of English Literature, p. 418.

heroic times of chivalry and mediaeval romance, resuscitated in an idealized form, furnish the favourite subjects of the greater number of these narratives, whose deepest charm and interest consist in the skilful blending of the romantic with the historical and familiar, in the unrivalled pictures of landscape scenery, and in the life-like and varied portraiture of characters, for which W. Scott has not unfitly been called "the Shakespeare of English prose". His style is but the reflection of his own gentlemanly character: vigorous, animated, and humorous, it is exempt from unmanly sentimentality and from all coarseness and immorality, which constitutes its finest adornment. W. Scott has found a host of imitators; his works have been translated into all civilized languages; they have become a property to all nations, ranks, and ages.

§ 84.

LORD BYRON*, 1788—1824.

George Gordon Noel Byron was the son of a dissipated and profligate father, John Byron, captain in the Guards, and an eccentric and passionate mother, Catharine Gordon, of Scotch descent. His father, having squandered his lady's dowry, abandoned her and his child, when the latter was only two years old, and died abroad. Lady Catharine Byron retired with her son to Aberdeen, where they lived on very limited means. Young Byron, who was of great personal beauty, — "whose head sculptors liked to model", — but of a susceptible and vain disposition, had much to suffer from the capricious treatment of his mother, constantly changing between excessive severity and exaggerated fondness, which no little contributed to embitter his irritable character. A slight deformity in one of his legs, often jeered and mocked at by his mother and later by his schoolfellows, became for him a lasting source of mortification, although it did not prevent him from acquiring an extraordinary skill in athletic sports. On the death of his grandfather, George Byron inherited his baronial title and estates with the hereditary family seat of Newstead-Abbey in Nottinghamshire. Mother and son returned to England, and the utterly spoiled young Lord was sent to Harrow-school, where he remained for six years, outshining his comrades by his accomplishments in swimming, boating, fencing, shooting, and horsemanship. In 1805 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where he became notorious for his irregular conduct and breach

of college discipline. Much of his time he spent in desultory reading, especially of Oriental history and travels, and in writing verse, which in 1807 he published under the title of *Hours of Idleness by Lord Byron, a Minor*. These youthful and weak productions suffered a harsh and even virulent criticism from the Edinburgh Review, which the young poet retorted by a violent satire, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, scourging almost all the literary men of the day and announcing his powerful, fiery genius.

Byron now undertook a great tour to the continent (1809—1811) and visiting Portugal, Spain, Greece, and Asia Minor, stored up in his mind rich observations and impressions of foreign life and scenes of historic interest, which he embodied in the two first cantos of his great poem, *Childe (Knight) Harold's Pilgrimage**, which appeared in 1812 and at once excited a storm of enthusiasm, raising the poet to the height of popularity, so that according to his own words, he "rose one morning, and found himself famous".

After his return to England, Byron produced in rapid succession his *Romantic Eastern Tales*, *The Giaour*, *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), *The Corsair**, *Lara* (1814), *The Siege of Corinth**, and *Parisina* (1815), which completed his fame and made him the literary lion of the day. In a somewhat fragmentary form, they fascinate the reader's mind by the splendid description of Eastern life and scenery, deep sentiment, and powerful dramatic passion, although without any variety of character.

The Giaour, "a broken tale", partly supposed to be told by a Turkish fisherman in the gulf of Aegina, who had been an eye-witness and one of the agents in the earlier mysterious occurrences, partly by the "giaour", the hero himself.

Leilah, the beautiful and beloved slave of the caliph Hassan, falls in love with a giaour, an infidel, and flees from the seraglio in the disguise of a Georgian page. She is overtaken, put to death, and, in the night, cast into the sea. Then Hassan, with twenty vassals, pursues the Giaour to the mountains. They meet in deadly fight; the Giaour cleaves Hassan's skull and flees for life. He finds a refuge in a convent, where he assumes the garb of a friar, but refuses to take the oath or to join in prayers. Years after he tells his tale to his father confessor on his death-bed, not wishing for paradise, but only for rest, and forbidding his name even to be inscribed on his tomb.

*The Corsair**. Lord Conrad, of a pale, stern countenance, with fiery eyes and sable curls, and of a haughty disposition, has become the chief of a band of pirates. He bitterly hates mankind, but Pacha Seyd in particular against whom he plots revenge. The only virtue of his heart is his ardent love for Medora who implores him to relinquish his dark design and to lead a solitary and happy life with her. He tears himself

from her embrace. They hide their vessels in a quiet nook of the coast, whilst the Corsair, in the disguise of a Dervis, penetrates into the castle and is brought before the Pacha, who is making a great feast "for promised triumph yet to come" over the "Rovers". Conrad is questioned about the pirates, when the blaze of the Pacha's burning fleet lights up the sky. The Corsair, discovered as a spy, fiercely defends his life, till his men come to his rescue. The Moslem flee, and the pirates fire the palace, when loud shrieks inform them of the endangered women in the harem. They carry them out of the flames; Conrad happens to save Gulnare, the "Harem Queen". When the Moslem discover the enemies' small number, they re-attack and overpower them. Conrad is fettered, imprisoned, and doomed to die; but Gulnare, being seized with a passionate love for her unknown saviour, penetrates into his prison, kills her loathed tyrant, and escapes with Conrad. A boat takes them to one of his vessels with the "blood-red flag". Returned to Medora's tower, he finds her dead; anguish and despair had broken her heart. The Corsair disappears in the same night and is no more heard or seen of on the coast.

Lara contains the melancholy sequel of *the Corsair* and the tragical end of Conrad who had assumed this name when returned to his own country. In the long-deserted hall of his ancestors, he leads a gloomy and solitary life in company of Caled, a youthful and handsome page. One night being invited by Lord Otho to a festival, he is recognized by Ezzelin who charges him home with his past. Lara challenges him to fight a duel on the next day, but in the night, Ezzelin mysteriously disappears and is never more heard of. Otho, who has pledged his honour for Ezzelin, fights in his stead and is severely wounded. He recovers, nourishing a deep hatred and thirst of revenge against Lara in his breast. Not long after, Lara heads a rebellion against feudal tyranny. After a passing victory, his undisciplined, prowling troops are discomfitted; he is wounded and dies in the lap of his faithful page, whose real sex is discovered; it was Gulnare. She dies of a broken heart and is buried by his side.

The Siege of Corinth. The grand army of the Turks beleaguered Corinth (1715) to open themselves a way into the heart of Moreth. Their bravest leader is Alp, an Adrian renegade of noble birth, who had suffered some wrong from his native city. He loved Francesca, the daughter of Minotti, now governor of Corinth, who had refused him. In a calm moonlight he wanders lonely beneath the walls of the beleaguered city, and sitting down at a ruined temple, suddenly beholds a female figure, his beloved, at his side, who entreats him to repent and to return to his faith. He proudly refuses; she has vanished into night. On the morning, the city is taken by assault; Alp meets the brave Minotti on the breach and vainly summons him to surrender. He learns from him his daughter's death, when an arrow pierces his brain. Within a church, now the magazine of the beleaguered and their last refuge, old Minotti stands before the altar, and when it is filled with foes, he fires the train to the magazine and "the turbanned victors and the Christian band in one wild roar expire".

These romances were followed by the *Hebrew Melodies*, elegiac poems in the old Hebrew character, lamenting the cala-

mities of the Israelites; *The Destruction of Sancherib* is the most effective of them.

In 1815 Byron concluded his unhappy marriage with Miss Milbanke, who after the birth of a daughter (Ada), left her husband for ever. Although the mystery of this step has never been cleared up, the public enthusiasm and idolatry suddenly turned into the most vindictive hatred. Byron, thus scorned and hated, resolved to leave his country and to spend his life in voluntary exile. In the spring of 1816 he left England, never to see it again. He travelled through Flanders, visited the battle-field of Waterloo, and went to Switzerland where he spent the summer on the borders of Lake Leman in the company of his highly gifted friend Shelley, and composed the powerful poem on *Darkness*, the sweetly mournful sketch *The Prisoner of Chillon**, the bold rhapsody *Prometheus*, and *Manfred*, a dramatic poem composed of mysterious and despairing soliloquies, suggested by Goethe's Faust, and the third canto of *Childe Harold*. Thence he proceeded to Italy, where he led an unsteady and irregular life at various places, especially at Venice and Ravenna (1818—1821). At the former place he completed the fourth canto of *Childe Harold* and various other poems, as *Beppo*, a humorous poetical narrative of Italian intrigue, *Ode to Venice*, *The Vision of Judgment*, a severe and brilliant satire upon the poet and apostate Southey; *Mazeppa*, a romantic tale of stirring interest, the first cantos of *Don Juan*, and most of his *Tragedies*.

Through his misfortune Byron's poetic qualities had been fully ripened and his genius attained to its highest degree of perfection: solemn gravity, deep pathos, marvellous, inexhaustible fancy, musical and pregnant language, true and powerful passion characterize all his works, particularly his *Childe Harold & Don Juan*.

Childe Harold is a kind of a "sentimental journey", whose characteristic feature is melancholy. It consists of an incoherent series of intensely poetical pictures and gloomy meditations, inspired either by beautiful and picturesque landscapes or by scenes of important historic events, as reflected in a life-weary and sceptical mind. The third and fourth cantos exhibit Byron's highest poetical talents, surpassing the first two in passionate, harmonious language, and profound reflections. The poem is written in the Spenserian stanza of great harmony; passion and pathos impart an air of solemn grandeur to this highly impressive poetical work.

Don Juan, the longest of his poems, although a fragment, is not only the most characteristic and most splendid, but also the most dangerous of his poems. It relates the strange adventures of a young atheist and libertine in a spirited and humorous language, coloured with the finest descriptions of scenery and teeming with rich and exquisite ideas and images, and with fervent outbursts of true poetic feelings, yet defiled by deplorable licentiousness and blasphemy. *Don Juan* is the poetical reflection of Byrons's own being, blending the noblest and brightest sentiments with the lowest and darkest in one powerful and dazzling picture.

Byron's dramatic works, *Marino Faliero**, *Sardanapalus**, *The Two Foscari*, *Werner*, *Cain*, a mystery, *Heaven and Earth*, *The Deformed Transformed*, although high poetical productions, cannot be equalled to those of Shakespeare for want of reality, dramatic movement, and variety and development of character. The poet did not possess the power "of going out of himself", and in his tragedies as well as in his romantic tales, he invariably represents the one dark, mysterious, and melancholy figure, the mirrored image of his own self.

Of these tragedies, *Cain* is the most powerful manifestation of the poet's vast and profound genius, whilst *Sardanapalus* may be considered as his ripest dramatic production; he dedicated it to Goethe.

Marino Faliero, the Doge of Venice, has been grievously insulted by a young nobleman, Michel Steno, at a masquerade in the ducal palace. His punishment seems too slight to the Doge, which heightens his irascible temper against the Venitian nobility. On the very day, Bertuccio, a plebeian and chief of the arsenal, has been struck by a nobleman and appears before the Doge to complain of the injury done to him and to see himself righted. Perceiving the Doge's hatred against the nobility and blinded by his passion, Bertuccio reveals to him a conspiracy of a number of congenial plebeians against the Venitian nobles who shall be exterminated on a certain day. At first startled at the horrible scheme, the old Doge at last degrades himself so far as to join the conspirators and to take a leading part in their plot. Bertram, one of the rebels, who has received numerous benefits from one of the noblemen, cannot make up his mind to see his benefactor destroyed, and gives him warning. He is arrested and the conspiracy is discovered. *Marino Faliero*, too, is apprehended, tried, found guilty of high treason, and sentenced to death.

Of Byron's minor poems the most important are *The Curse of Minerva*, a vehement denunciation against Lord Elgin, the spoliator of the frieze of the Parthenon;¹ *The Age of Bronze*,

¹ He sold it to the English government for the sum of £ 35 000. It is now in the British Museum.

a biting satire on the reign of George III.; *The Lament of Tasso*, composed on an excursion to Ferrara; *The Niobe of Nations*, written in Rome; *The Prophecy of Dante*, a fragment in the terza rima; *The Dream*, a touching narrative of his own youthful love,¹ written in the most exquisite harmonious language, and *The Island*, a poetical tale of great perfection in four cantos, written at Genoa where the poet had removed from Pisa, his previous residence.

When in 1823 Greece had begun her struggle for independence from the Turkish yoke, Byron, who was possessed of a profound and glowing hatred against all tyranny, and who had already sympathized with the republican efforts of Italy, determined to devote his life and fortune to the assistance of the Greeks. In the January of 1824, he landed at Missolonghi, where he was enthusiastically received; and finding but discord and confusion in the country, himself raised a brigade of Sulliots,² of which he was to take the command in the attack of Lepanto, when suddenly a fever seized him and snatched him away at the early age of thirty-six years. His body was conveyed to England, but the public deeming his remains unworthy of a tomb in Westminster Abbey, they were interred in the family vault at Hucknall near Newstead.

Byron's personal character was a mixture of the most heterogeneous qualities, founded partly in his passionate temper and partly owing to a faulty education and to adverse circumstances. With a generous benevolence, he combined the gravest misanthropy, tender love and compassion, with the bitterest sarcasm and disdain, and lofty and noble aspirations, with degrading weaknesses and vices.

His poetry is the faithful representation of this strangely mixed character. Its most prominent features are melancholy, grandeur, and gloomy despair of Providence, of mankind, and himself, mingled with pride, scorn, and scepticism, allowing no prospect on a serene and better world. Scenes of "violent

¹ Miss Mary Chaworth, older than himself, returned his ardent passion only by a cool friendship. Her memory left deep and indelible traces in the poet's heart throughout his life. Cf. *Don Juan*, Canto V, 4: "I have a passion for the name of Mary".

² The Sulliots, an Albanian tribe, were distinguished for cunning and bravery in their struggles against the Turkish oppression. They took an active part in the rising of Greece, but are pretty nearly extinct now. Only a few families have risen to honours in Greece.

passion and guilty horror", in which he liked to identify himself with the most abject characters, were chosen by him with predilection. The most grievous of his moral faults, however, consists in his "mixing up, incessantly, in one and the same character, the utmost extremes of virtue and vice, of generosity and ferocity, of lofty heroism and sensual grossness," and in his attempts "to show that the most precious gifts and affections are not only akin to guilt, but the parents of misery", thus confounding our notions and principles of right and wrong, and sapping the sacred foundations of social order and morality.

Nevertheless, Byron was the greatest poetic genius, whom England has produced since Shakespeare; unrivalled in impassioned strength and lofty grandeur, in his "fine sense of the beautiful", in his fervent love for nature, freedom, and humanity, in his masterly painting of thrilling passion and tender pathos, and in his brilliant and vigorous poetic diction, his works and his name will live as long as poetry itself.

§ 85.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY, 1792—1822.

Percy B. Shelley, the second great poetic genius of this time, was born of an opulent family at Fieldplace, Sussex. He was sent to Eton College where his sensitive nature soon rebelled against the brutal system of boyish tyranny and oppression, in consequence of which he was sent away. He went to Oxford with a glowing hatred against all cruelty and bigotry in his heart and a fierce antipathy against priesthood and religion, which he identified and believed the only sources of all human miseries. Out of this firm conviction he wrote a treatise, "*On the Necessity of Atheism*", in which he propounded his arguments against christianity, and for which he was expelled once more. Having, not long after, married a beautiful girl of inferior rank, the unhappy youth was not only cast out from society, but even renounced by his family. It was during this wretched period of his life that he poured forth his first brilliant poems. His marriage age, however, proving unhappy, he separated from his wife, who some years after, when Shelley had already formed another engagement with Miss Mary Godwin,¹ committed suicide. About this time, an annual pension of £ 1000 had fallen to his share, the

¹ Daughter of the novelist William Godwin (v. § 97).

poet was for ever relieved from his bitter pecuniary embarrassments. Loathing the bigotry of his country, which had even denied to him the guardianship of his children, and longing, besides, for a milder climate because of his delicate health, he quitted England and went first to Switzerland, where he formed a warm friendship with Byron, and finally to Italy. There he lived at different places, but particularly in Rome, where he composed the greater part of his rich and enchanting poetry. In these peregrinations, his worthy, loving wife was his steady companion, and richly indemnified him for the wrongs of the world, restoring in him the belief in a bright future of mankind. His death was premature and tragic. Sailing with a friend in a yacht from Leghorn, they were caught by a squall and drowned in the Gulf of Spezzia. A few days after, his body was cast ashore and burnt in the ancient manner by his friends Byron and Leigh Hunt. His ashes were buried in Rome near the Pyramid of Cestius.

Hardly eighteen years old, he composed his *Queen Mab* (1811), a wild and fantastic conception, in which he laid down his ideal of the perfectability of the world. Though yet crude and defective, it evinces the young poet's high poetic talents in many lovely images and tender, brilliant thoughts. This was followed by the finest and noblest of his works, *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude* (1815), which he composed near Windsor Forest. It has been called "a transfiguration of his own life",¹ and depicts the sufferings of a character driven to solitude by the perverseness and ingratitude of man. It is full of pantheistical raptures, expressed in enchanting descriptions of nature. Its measure is the blank verse. His next poem, *The Revolt of Islam* (1817), is an epic poem of unearthly fancy, but without any well-defined characters. It contains a series of pictures representing a powerful soul successfully struggling against the wickedness and perfidies in social and religious life, and re-instating humanity and virtue in their stead.

Shelley's two dramatic works are *Prometheus Unbound*, and *The Cenci*. The former is of a more lyrical character, abounding in passages of highest beauty and sublimity and embodying the poet's unmitigable enmity and "Titanic resistance" against all social and religious systems and chanting the praise of the "world-saving power of humanity". *The Cenci* is a re-

¹ J. Scherr, *Geschichte der engl. Literatur*, p. 21^r.

gular tragedy of Shakespearian force, although unfit for representation because of its horrid nature: monstrous atrocities and unnatural, hideous crimes form its component parts.

In *Rosalind and Helen*, a narrative poem, the poet endeavours to show the evils arising from marriage. *Adonais* is a touching lament on the early death of the highly gifted poet Keats. *Swellfoot the Tyrant* and *The Masque of Anarchy* are two political satires, the former directed against George IV. and his scandalous divorce of Queen Caroline, and the latter against the Manchester Massacre.¹ Shelley's minor poems are of high lyrical beauty, the most felicitous of them are *The Sensitive Plant*, *Ode to a Skylark*, and *The Cloud*.

Shelley's brief and chequered life was ruled by one dominant and noble idea: the improvement of the material and intellectual condition of mankind, to which he sacrificed his home, his children, his name, and great part of his fortune. He was, likewise, possessed of a profound abhorrence for all that is mean and corrupt; and ascribing all the human abominations and sufferings to the influence of religion, government, and marriage, he directed his fierce and spirited attacks against these salutary institutions.

All his poetic works and private actions, therefore, although founded on erroneous principles, were pervaded by the purest and profoundest sympathy with mankind and a firm faith in the all-saving power of love and the immortality of the soul.

Shelley's poetry offers a blending of the highest poetical qualities: rich, overflowing imagination, vigorous, fiery expression, and a musical versification. The flaws in this bright sun are "a haziness of thought and an uncertainty of expression", and "a want of sympathy with ordinary and universal feelings"; they are but the natural emanations of an over-sensitive and transcendent poetic genius.

§ 86.

JOHN KEATS*, 1796—1821.

John Keats, the youthful poetic genius, was born in London of obscure parents and died in the prime of his life and genius. "The publication of three small volumes of verse, some earnest friendship, one profound passion, and a premature

* In the month of August 1819.

death are the only incidents of his career."¹ He received a classic education, but was early apprenticed to a surgeon and apothecary, where he devoted most of his time to the earnest cultivation of poetry. He published a volume of juvenile poems in 1817 and in the following year *Endymion*, a sweet and graceful poem treating the known legend of Grecian mythology. This artless song received a harsh welcome from the Quarterly Review and was even contemptuously sneered at by Byron. This rude attack has, without foundation, been said to have shortened the life of the highly sensitive poet whose hereditary consumptive constitution had already been undermined by the careful tending of a dying brother and the hopeless love for a romantic young lady. He went to Rome, vainly seeking for help. There he died in his twenty-fifth year and was buried in the Protestant cemetery near the Pyramid of Cestius.

The year before his death, Keats had published another volume of poems containing *Lamia*, a story of Greek witchcraft. *Hyperion*, only a fragment, whose subject is the dethroning of the ancient gods, is generally considered as the poet's highest effort; *The Eve of Saint Agnes*, *The Pot of Basil*, *Isabella*, and a number of beautiful odes of which those *To a Nightingale*, *On Autumn*, *On a Greek Vase*, and *On Sleep and Poetry* are the most exquisite.

Keats was a true, original poet, endowed with an over-luxuriant fancy, deep and tender sentiment, a rich profusion of fantastical imagery, and a refined ideal sensuousness springing from his enthusiastic admiration of beauty. The lovely beginning of his *Endymion* has become proverbial: "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever." "His works are the rapturous voice of youthful fancy, luxuriating with deep delight in a world of beautiful unrealities." In those of his poems founded on mythic subjects, he introduced a new poetical feeling by idealizing the characters of Pagan mythology. His chief peculiarities were the use of obsolete versification in imitation of the Elizabethan language of poetry, and an extreme fondness of sound and rhyme, by which he was often carried away from his subject.

¹ Lord Houghton.

§ 87.

FELICIA HEMANS*, 1793—1835.

Felicia Hemans, the daughter of a Liverpool merchant, holds the first rank in lyric and reflective poetry. From her childhood, which she spent amid the lovely scenery of Wales, she wrote verse filled with a deep love of nature and religious hope. Only fifteen years old, she published her first volume of poems, *Early Blossoms*, which was harshly criticized; four years later it was followed by a second and more successful one, containing *The Domestic Affections and other Poems* (1812). About this time she married Captain Hemans, who, after some years, went to live in Rome leaving to her the education of her five sons, to which she devoted the rest of her life, residing at several places and spending her last years in Dublin, where this admirable lady and sweet poetess died in 1835.

To the best of her lyric effusions belong the following collections: *Songs of the Affections* (1830), *Hymns for Childhood* (1834), and *Scenes and Hymns of Life*, the two latter published the year before her death. Among her epic works, *The Forest Sanctuary* (1826) in the Spenser stanza, is considered the finest; nor are her *Songs of Cid* and *The Indian Town* without great beauty. Her only tragedy, *The Vespers of Palermo*, must be called a failure. Some of her smaller lyrics, *The Graves of a Household*, *The Child's First Grief*, *The Better Land*, *The Song of Night*, *The Hour of Prayer*, *The Homes of England*, *The Voice of Spring*, will ever be cherished as pearls of English poetry.

Felicia is undoubtedly the foremost of English lyric poetesses, excelling both in language and sentiment. As an epic poet, she likewise exhibits great talents, especially in freshness of life and colouring. The language of all her poems is musical and graceful, almost presenting, as Walter Scott says, too many flowers for the fruit. A tone of soft melancholy, tender pathos, and deep religious sentiment breathes throughout all her poetry.

§ 88.

THOMAS MOORE*, 1779—1852.

Thomas Moore, born at Dublin of humble Catholic parents, received a good education and gave early indications of poetic talents. At the age of fourteen, he entered Dublin University

and later the Temple in London, in order to study the law, but preferred the career of a poet. He translated the *Odes of Anacreon* (1800) and dedicated them to the Prince Regent, who received him among his aristocratic and gay society, for which he was singularly gifted by his fine conversational powers and his musical and poetical talents. In the next year, he published a volume of original juvenile poems under the fictitious name of Thomas Little in allusion to his short stature. A few years after, the favourite poet of society obtained a government office in the Bermudas Islands which from personal unfitness and through the dishonesty of a substitute, he did not discharge to his credit. However, he took advantage of this opportunity and travelled in America, collecting materials for some of his political satires. After a sojourn in France and Italy, where he formed a close friendship with Byron, he retired into the country, industriously occupying himself with literary works, and closed his serene and successful life in 1852.

His poetic works are of a lyric, satiric, and narrative character. The most beautiful and popular of his lyrics are his *Irish Melodies* (1807—1834), a collection of 125 songs, skilfully adapted to old Irish airs which had been harmonized by Sir John Stevenson. They are chiefly of a patriotic nature, calling to remembrance the past glories and sufferings, and foreshadowing the future greatness of Ireland. The language is of an incomparable refinement and sweetness and full of melancholy pathos and sparkling fancy. Of a like musical and tender character are his *National Airs*, consisting of about seventy songs, which were to be accompanied by tunes of various nations. His *Sacred Songs* are of a lofty, religious tone and a highly finished style, though frequently marred by spirited conceits.

Among the poems of a satiric and humorous character, the most noted are *The Intercepted Letters, or the Twopenny Postbag* (1810), a collection of fictitious letters, pretended to have been written by eminent political personages, exposing Toryism to ridicule. The second is *The Fudge Family in Paris* (1810), also in the form of letters, presenting an interesting and faithful picture of the corruption of the English aristocracy at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Moore's greatest and most important poetic work is *Lalla Rookh** (Tulip-cheek), an oriental tale of love in prose, interspersed with four separate poems, conceived in the luxurious

spirit of Asiatic poetry and completing a dazzling picture of Eastern life and scenery. *Lalla Rookh*, the daughter of Aurungzebe, King of India, is betrothed to the Prince Royal of Bucharia, who at the head of an embassy and in the disguise of a minstrel, called Feramorz, comes to fetch her in order to celebrate their nuptials at Cashmere, and secretly wins her heart on the journey by his graceful appearance and charming recitals, viz., *The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan*, *The Fire Worshippers*, *Paradise and the Peri*, and *The Light of the Haram*, unsurpassed for beauty and richness of imagery and brilliancy of description.

The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan is a terrible night-piece describing the horrible aberrations of blind superstition. About the year 785 there appeared in Khorassan, the eastern province of Persia, an impostor, named Mokanna, who pronounced himself to be Allah's prophet, sent for the relief and happiness of mankind. An immense host of fanatics blindly obeyed him as their king and prophet, who threatened the Orient with a new overthrow. On a splendid throne the 'Envoy of God' is sitting, his face covered with a silver veil; for no man can bear the divine radiance of his features. Thousands listen in awful reverence to his blasphemies; all countries send their chaste daughters to be destined for the bliss of heaven.

A tender, innocent girl, Zelica, whose reason had been troubled through the loss of her brave lover Azim in war, has hastened to the false prophet in mad joy and has become his favourite. He purposes to render her as devilish as he is himself, that, by her extasy, she may stir the fanaticism of the people, promising her the union with her beloved warrior in heaven. He inflames her fancy by hellish arts, till she turns a wild demon. Suddenly Azim reappears from his prison in Greece, where he had been imbued with the noblest ideas and inclinations. Mokanna attempts to seduce him by the help of Zelica. At sight of him, she is convulsed with mental agony. To deal her the finishing blow, her tormentor shows her his fiendish soul and his frightfully maimed face, reminding her at the same time of the terrible oath which binds her to him with body and soul. Azim, heart-struck, hastens for vengeance. Mokanna is overthrown by the Khalif's army, but escapes with Zelika and some followers. Beleaguered in his last stronghold, he announces to them the approach of the hour of victory. They are invited to a banquet, where all the dishes have been poisoned by him. They eat, and when they writhe under the pangs of approaching death, he unveils his grim, frightful face. When all are dead, he, with atrocious blasphemies, jumps into a cistern full of burning drugs to destroy every vestige of him and thus to uphold the belief in his future return. In the meantime, the army has scaled the walls; Azim foremost. A veiled figure rushes upon his spear: it is Zelika, happy to die in his arms.

The Fire-Worshippers presents a gloomy picture glorifying a noble martyrdom. Iran has been conquered; the fires of the Parses are quenched; the Koran rules. Only in the mountains, there still is a little troop, the last Guebres (fire-worshippers), struggling for freedom,

country, and religion. Hafed leads them; they achieve wonders of valour. But the superior force of the Mohometans is overpowering. At last, but one stronghold, a mountain on the shore of the Green Sea is left to them, rendered inaccessible by steep precipices. Below on the strand, the palace of Al Hassan, the tyrant, towers. It is night; he sleeps; his lovely daughter Hinda sits dreaming, when a Guebre rustles in through the window to seek the lion in his den. It is Hafed himself. Quick as lightning, love thrills through both their hearts. Many a time he repeats his perilous venture; but ruin hangs over him. A traitor has indicated to the Emin a secret path up the mountain; exultingly he tells it to his terrified daughter. To spare her the sight of the bloody scenes of war, he sends her in a ship to Yemen, her peaceful home. The ship is taken by the Guebres; Hafed brings up his beloved to his mountain. There she breaks to him the dreadful fate impending over him and implores him to fly with her. Yet he remains firm in his purpose; he sends her in safety to the sea-shore, whilst preparing for the last combat. Night is falling; the frightful struggle begins. Thousands of Mohometans fall, but the Guebres must succomb and die. Hafed cuts his way to the summit, where in a ruined temple the woodpile is prepared. Here he throws himself into the flames. Hinda sees it from the skiff, sends a heart-rending shriek and jumps into the dark sea.

Paradise and the Peri treats the sublimest idea: sinful man redeemed. A Peri (an aerial spirit, one of the fallen angels, driven out with Lucifer from Paradise) languishingly pines and weeps at the gates of paradise. The guardian angel pities her and tells her she shall be forgiven, if she brings the gift most dear to Heaven. She joyfully hastens to the earth. On the banks of the Ganges, a youth fights to the last against the oppressor of his country; he scorns the pardon and falls in fighting. The Peri gathers his heart-blood and carries it to the gates of Heaven. It is welcome, but not holy enough. Then her erring flight leads her to Egypt, where a plague is raging. A youth drags his sick body to the desert to die alone. But his beloved, the delicate daughter of the king, steals after him in order to die with him. Her last sigh is brought by the hopeful Peri to Eden's gate. The angel kindly smiles, but the crystal bars close again: a holier gift is wanted. She wings her way to the foot of the Libanon. Here a lovely boy is playing among the roses. Not much afar, a man of a terrible, guilty aspect alights from his horse to drink at a fountain. He savagely looks at the child. The bell tolls and the boy kneels down to pray with upraised hands. Overcome with early remembrances, the man of crime is humbled. He weeps and prays — and is saved. The Peri wipes off his tears, puts them into the angel's hand, "and Heaven is won."

The Light of the Haram is a charming picture of oriental magnificence. The valley of Cashmere is celebrating the feast of roses; nature makes a splendid show of beauty and magnificence, and the people revel in fragrance of flowers and joy of love. Only two eyes are sad, the loveliest of all; only one heart is alone. Nourmahal, "the Light of the Haram", the bliss of the world, sits mourning in her bower; for Sultan Selim is offended with her and has banished her from his sight. Namouna, a sorceress, advises to conjure some aerial spirit to learn from him in a dream the means of gaining back her Selim's love. Swiftly Nourmahal gathers the herbs, which Namouna twines to a wreath to put it on her

ady's head. Then Nourmahal falls asleep, and the genius of music appears and promises to give her back the Sultan. Selim also longs for her, but will not confess it and tries to dissipate his mind by a luxurious banquet. The prettiest Georgian sings her sweetest songs. But there rises a disguised Arabian maiden and pours her soul into a song that charms the Sultan's heart. In extacy he exclaims: "Oh Nourmahal, if thou hadst sung so!" Lo! the disguise falls, and Selim raptly locks Nourmahal into his arms.

Moore, also, wrote a great number of poems of a miscellaneous character. His chief prose works are the *Biographies of Sheridan, Byron, and Lord Fitzgerald*, of which the second is the most important being printed from the great poet's own diary and correspondence. *The Epicurean*, a narrative, represents the struggle of Egyptian hierarchy and Greek philosophy against Christianity in its infancy.

Thomas Moore was the most admired and most popular poet of his time after W. Scott. He was endowed with a bright, sharp wit, a fine humour, and a brilliant fancy. His language, though not exempt from pointed, epigrammatic turns, is of a natural grace and fluency.

MINOR POETS.

§ 89.

James Hogg* (1770—1835), called "the Ettrick Shepherd", from keeping a farm on the banks of the Ettrick in Selkirkshire, had received a most scanty education; but possessing fine natural gifts, especially a quick and retentive memory and a vivid sense of the beauty of the surrounding scenery, and taking great delight in legendary tales, collected pieces for Scott's "*Border Minstrelsy*", and wrote himself some songs and ballads, which he published in a small volume in 1801. Then followed *The Mountain Bard* (1807), after which he went to reside in Edinburgh, supporting himself by his pen. His true poetical talents, however, became most favourably manifest in *The Queen's Wake* (1813), a series of legendary ballads supposed to have been recited by Queen Mary on Christmas Eve, among which the fairy tale of *Kilmeny* and *The Witch of Fife* are the most exquisite. Other poems of his, *Madoc of the Moor*, in the Spenserian stanza, *Winter Evening Tales*, and *The Pilgrims of the Sun*, a fairy tale in blank-verse, and others were collected under the common title of *The Shepherd's Calendar* in 1829. He also wrote several novels.

Hogg's prevailing faculty was his fancy; yet he was unskilled in the rules of art to construe and to give effect to fables. Many of his songs are of great poetic beauty.

James Montgomery* (1771—1854), a Scotchman, was brought up in the Moravian creed, and manifested precocious talent for writing verse. With a collection of poems in his pocket, he deserted from his apprenticeship, obtained the post of a clerk in a newspaper-office at Sheffield, and later, with the help of some friends, rose to independence by establishing a weekly paper at the same place. He was twice imprisoned and fined, for having published articles of a revolutionary tendency. While in prison, he composed a series of poems called *Prison Amusements* (1795—96). After having relinquished his former principles, he wrote poetry of a highly devotional character. His first publication was *The Wanderer of Switzerland and other Poems* (1806) of melodious versification; then followed *The West-Indies* (1807), *The World before the Flood* (1813), *Greenland*, and *The Pelican Island* (1819), all adorned with rich descriptive beauties, besides many minor poems of which *The Common Lot* is ranked the first.

All his poems are of a noble diction and a solemn, meditative tone, ranking with the finest of religious poetry in the English language.

§ 90.

John Wilson* (1785—1854) (pseudonym Christopher North), the friend and admirer of Wordsworth, won his earliest laurels in poetry, although he was to reap greater honours by his prose. He was the son of a wealthy Scotch manufacturer, studied at Glasgow and Oxford, and then lived on the banks of Windermere in happy intercourse with Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey. He was of a frank and generous character, and of a vigorous strength both in body and intellect. In his poem, *The Isle of Palms* (1812), a narrative romance of two shipwrecked lovers, who after a seven years' solitude on a deserted island are saved at last, he adopted the style of Wordsworth, wherefore he has sometimes been reckoned among the Lakists. His other great poem, *The City of the Plague* (1816), contains a series of touching dramatic pictures of the great Plague of London, represented with great depth of emotion.

Meanwhile Wilson had lost all his fortune and had removed to Edinburgh to live by his pen. He became the soul of Black-

wood's Magazine, for which he furnished numberless articles under the pseudonym of Christopher North. Most popular became his *Noctes Ambrosianae*, witty and brilliant conversations of fascinating eloquence on all sorts of subjects, especially on politics and literary criticism. Not less attractive were his novels, as *Light and Shadows of Scottish Life* (1822), *The Trials of Margaret Lindsay* (1823), and *The Forester* (1825), sweet, pathetic tales, agreeably blending poetry with the prose of life, and best exhibiting the author's gentle and tender spirit.

In 1820 Wilson had been appointed Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. He died in 1854, after having enjoyed for three years a pension of £ 300 from the government.

Wilson's prevailing quality was a delicacy and tenderness of feeling, which manifested itself in a great sensibility to the charms of nature and a warm sympathy with human sufferings and sorrow. Exuberant fancy, adorned with fresh and natural images, and brilliancy of wit and humour, intermingled with tenderness and pathos, are the chief features of his writings.

§ 91.

Thomas Hood* (1799—1845), the most efficient of modern humourists, was the son of a London bookseller and publisher. He received his education at Clapham school and was bound apprentice to his uncle, an engraver. His delicate health, however, compelled him to give up this trying occupation, and in 1821 he entered upon his brief literary career as sub-editor of the London Magazine. His first considerable contributions to poetic literature were *Odes and Addresses to Great Men*, published anonymously in association with Reynolds, his brother-in-law. Then appeared two series of *Whims and Oddities*, which made his name popular. In 1830 he established his *Comic Annual*, in which he poured forth the humorous effusions of his fertile pen, until in 1834 he sustained great losses through the bankruptcy of a firm, whereupon he determined to settle with his family at Koblenz, at the same time seeking relief from a lingering illness. A few years after, he removed to Ostend, and in 1840 back again to London, where he undertook the editorship of the *New Monthly* until the foundation of his own Magazine in 1844. From 1843—44 he published his *Whimsicalities*. The year after he was cut off in the prime of his life.

Hood ranks highest with the poets of a second order. His larger poetic works are *The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies* (1827) and *Hero and Leander*. The finest of his pathetical poems are *Love's Eclipse*, *The Deathbed*, a most tender and touching little effusion, *I remember*, of deep melancholy, *Eugene Aram*, the most powerful, *The Song of the Shirt*, and *The Bridge of Sighs*, the best known and most effective of his poems. The happiest and most sustained of his humorous poems is *Miss Kilmansegg*.

Hood was decidedly the greatest wit of his age, endowed with an extraordinary power of perception for the odd and ridiculous, yet possessed of a profound seriousness and sympathy with humanity. "The most characteristic feature of his genius was this combination of contradictions, which gives point to his merriest jest as well as to his deepest pathos." "His varied pen touched alike the springs of laughter and the sources of tears." His wit, though caustic, is never coarse or impure.

As a poet, Thomas Hood was gifted with a fine and graceful fancy and a vivid sensation for the beauties of nature. His poetic works breathe a profound sympathy with human life and character and are pervaded by a tone of sadness and melancholy.

§ 92.

Leigh Hunt* (James Henry) (1784—1859), was the son of an American lawyer who, after the Declaration of Independence, was compelled to leave his country, and settled as a preacher in England. Here the future poet and essayist was born at Southgate in Middlesex in 1784. After an incomplete education at Christ's Hospital, there followed some years of idling about, occasionally interrupted by contributions to journals in prose and verse, until he joined his brother in editing a literary paper, called *The Examiner*, in 1808. Then he was convicted for libel on the Prince Regent and kept for two years in prison, where he continued his literary pursuits, and received the visits of Byron and Moore and other distinguished friends. On his release, he published several poems and his *Story of Rimini* (1816) in graceful easy rhyme, founded upon a passage of Dante's "Divine Comedy", which established his fame. In 1821 he visited Byron in Italy. Of his most important poems must be mentioned *Captain Sword and Captain Pen* (1839), levelled at the spirit of war; *The Legend of Florence* (1840), a powerful drama and "one of the finest

plays that had been produced since Beaumont and Fletcher"; *The Palfrey* (1842), a narrative poem on an old romantic theme. Besides these, he arranged selections of fine passages from English poets, and legends and stories from Italian and Sicilian poetry.

His prose works consist of *Essays*, most of which are collected in *The Indicator* (1819—21), *The Companion* (1828), and *The Tatler* (1830—32); of *Memoirs*, as of Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Farquhar, and Sheridan, and of *Sketches*, short *Stories*, *Reflections* etc. In 1850 he published his *Autobiography* of great frankness and veracity.

Leigh Hunt's poetry is of a natural gracefulness, fancy, and liveliness, particularly in his descriptions which are fresh, clear, and picturesque, reflecting the true colours of nature, wherefore he has been called "the delightful poet". His prose is of an artless, familiar, and sprightly diction.

Charles Wolfe (1791—1823), an Irish Protestant minister of Dublin, secured a lasting reputation by two small, pathetic poems, *The Burial of Sir John Moore*, published in 1817, which has long been ascribed to Byron, and "*If I had thought, thou couldst have died*". He died of consumption in 1823. His literary compositions were collected and published in 1826.

§ 93.

Letitia Elizabeth Landon* (L. E. L.) (1802—1838), the favourite of admirers of keepsakes and poetical albums, was the daughter of an army agent at Chelsea. She published her occasional verses in various periodicals, especially in the *Literary Gazette*. Of her lyric-epical poems the most popular are *The Improvisatrice*, published with other poems in 1824, *The Troubadour* (1825), *The Golden Violet* (1826), a chain of romances. She also wrote three novels of which *Romance and Reality* (1830) may be mentioned as the best.

In 1838 she married the Governor of Cape Coast Castle, Mr. George Maclean. There she found a tragical death through poison about two months after her arrival.

Rich, luxuriant fancy and delicate, lively sentiment, expressed in a melodious language, are characteristics of her poetic muse.

Joanna Baillie (1762—1851), the daughter of a Presbyterian clergyman, was born in Lanarkshire and spent most of

her life at Hampstead. She wrote a number of dramatic works, which, though of great power, are not fit to be represented on the stage. She commenced by a *Series of Plays on the Passions* (1798—1836), in which she intended to make each passion the theme of a tragedy and a comedy. She succeeded best in the delineation of Fear. Only one of her plays, *De Montfort*, has been represented. "Woman", wrote Byron, "cannot write Tragedy, save Joanna Baillie".

PROSE LITERATURE.

Essayists & Critics.

§ 94.

CHARLES LAMB*, 1775—1834.

Charles Lamb, the schoolfellow and friend of Coleridge, was born in London under humble circumstances, his father labouring in a lawyer's office. Of a shy and excitable yet gentle nature, and slightly subjected to stammering, his life was that of a recluse. At seventeen he accepted the post of a clerk in the India House, which, though not congenial to his tastes, he kept for thirty-three years. In his family, insanity seems to have been hereditary; for in his twentieth year, he was himself sent to an asylum, for a few weeks, and not long after his sister Mary committed the horrible deed of stabbing her own mother at table in a fit of mental derangement. She was placed in a lunatic asylum, from which her brother could only release her after his solemn pledge to take watchful care of her throughout her life. In consequence he never married.

He tried various branches of literary work. His two first attempts at dramatic composition, a tragedy, *John Woodvil*, and a comedy, *Mr. H.*, were condemned by the critics. A better success attended his prose-writings, first his *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807), a joint-work with his sister, then his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who lived about the Time of Shakespeare*, but chiefly his *Essays*, published under the pseudonym of *Elia* in the London Magazine. They are miscellaneous sketches of life, fanciful and meditative, of fine poetic feeling, spirit, and humour, and an indescribable grace and delicacy in style and sentiment, "by which readers are ever alternately per-

plexed, and amused, and moved, and delighted". In 1830 the author published a collection of smaller poems entitled *Album Verse*.

In 1834 he stumbled in a walk, and in falling slightly cut his face; erysipelas setting in, he died a few days after.

Charles Lamb was no prominent poet; his poems are mostly lyrical, and full of grace and tenderness; *The Old Familiar Faces* may be regarded as the finest. His chief merit lies in his prose writings, through which he has contributed to the general knowledge and recognition of the dramatic poets of the sixteenth century, especially of Shakespeare. His style is elaborate and pure.

§ 95.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY*, 1786–1859.

Thomas de Quincey was the son of wealthy merchant of Manchester. He lost his father early and received his first education at home. Then he was sent to a Grammar school from which he ran away. He took up his abode in Wales where his friends sent him a guinea a week. Weary with this existence, he went to London, leading a wretched life, until his friends found him, took him home, and then sent him to Oxford. Being tormented with a painful disease, he tried opium as a remedy, whereby he took to this horrible habit, from which, however, he tore himself later with great energy, but with a shattered health. He lived for a time at Grasmere in Cumberland in the society of the Lake Poets. In 1843 he removed to Scotland and settled at Laswade; he died at Edinburgh in 1859.

Most of de Quincey's writings were contributions to magazines and consist of Sketches, Essays, and Poems. He is best known by his *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821), the strange and fascinating story of his early life, and *Suspiria de Profundis* (Sighs from the deep), an imaginative work in a poetical kind of prose. Other valuable works of his are his *Lives of Shakespeare* and *Pope*, published in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and his *Logic of Political Economy*, characterized by a wonderful eloquence and thoroughness of treatment.

The conditions both of his body and mind were abnormal. He possessed a subtle intellect, fine humour, great pathos and originality, and could write on almost any subject. But through his being addicted to the above-mentioned terrible vice, he

thought and wrote only by fits, wherfrom most of his works are but fragments. In elegance and harmony of style he vies with the great masters of English composition, Addison and Macaulay.

Sidney Smith (1771—1845), canon of St. Paul's, earned, by his comic, humorous sayings and irresistible dry sarcasm, the reputation of a brilliant wit. He was one of the originators of the *Edinburgh Review*, in which he took an active share. His *Letters on the Subject of the Catholics*, by Peter Plymley is one of the finest and most powerful political treatises. The same skilful power of sly, amusing wit is displayed in his *Letters to Archdeacon Singleton* and *Letters on the Pennsylvanian Bonds*.

William Hazlitt (1778—1830), originally a painter, turned writer and became one of the best critics, contributing largely to the periodicals of the day. He is chiefly celebrated for his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, his *Table Talk*, and his *Lectures upon the English Poets*, but his most important work is his *Life of Napoleon*. He, besides, contributed a great number of *Essays* on English novelists in the *Edinburgh Review*. His writings are distinguished for delicacy of taste and richness of imagination; his style is clear, vivid, and picturesque.

Novelists.

§ 96.

MISS MARIA EDGEWORTH*, 1767—1849.

Maria Edgeworth, the head of female novelists, devoted her life to the cultivation of the historic and didactic novel of an exclusively local colouring. She was born at Edgeworthtown in the county of Longford, Ireland, and received a careful education chiefly from her father, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, a somewhat eccentric yet benevolent man, and author of some educational and engineering works. She opened her literary career in 1801 by an *Essay on Irish Bulls*, in which she was assisted by her father, who also lent a hand in her earlier novels. Most of her novels appeared in series or collections involving some moral or practical lessons towards the improvement of her people's condition. The first series, called *A Series of Early Lessons* and written in a very simple style and language, were particularly intended for the young, but are even "delightful to the adult reader" from their intrinsic value and attracting narrative. Then followed *The Parent's Assistant*, destined for the more advanced age and fighting against the common errors and weaknesses of both sexes; *The Moral Tales*, *Popular Tales*, and *Tales of Fashionable Life*, exhibiting the

horrors and temptations of middle and aristocratic society. The most characteristic of Miss Edgeworth's novels is *Castle Rackrent*, exposing the follies and extravagances of the Irish in a series of humorous and pathetic characters of Irish landlords. Other social calamities form the subjects in *Patronage*, *Harrington* and *The Absentee*.

The authoress closed her literary career with a novel called *Helen*. In 1821 she had paid a visit to her admirer and imitator Sir Walter Scott at his manor of Abbotsford. She died in 1849.

Miss Edgeworth accomplished for her native country in some respect what Scott has done in a wider sense for Scotland. With the rare talents of an acute observer, she discerned and appreciated the merits and defects of the Irish character, especially of the peasantry; and gifted with a great deal of common sense and the noble desire of alleviating the sufferings of her country people and to inspire them with better feelings, especially the labouring classes, she indefatigably exposed the fatal errors and abuses of their old customs and systems in a most pleasing manner, affording both entertainment and instruction. Thus her novels are ingenious combinations of good sense and precept, practical utility and amusement, which have rendered good services to the cause of common sense. Their style is elaborate and pleasant.

§ 97.

CONTINUATION OF NOVELISTS.¹

William Godwin (1756—1836), father-in-law of the poet Shelley, created the so-called "Sensational Novel" (v. § 75) by his *Caleb Williams*, showing in glaring colours the wrongs arising from imperfect laws. He, besides, wrote a number of other novels and a *Life of Chaucer*.

Mrs. Hamilton (1758—1816) is the authoress of an amusing and highly instructive book, *The Cottagers of Glenburnie*.

Matthew Lewis (1775—1818), also a dramatic writer, wrote sensational novels such as *The Monk*, a horrible story, and *The Bravo of Venice*.

Miss Austen (1775—1817) describes the patriarchal life of the English gentry in a pleasant and faithful manner, without passion or poetry, and in an easy, natural and elegant style. *Sense and Sensibility**, *Pride and Prejudice**, *Mansfield Park** are her most popular works.

Anne Radcliffe (1764—1823) distinguished among the founders of the "sensational novel", gained her effects by an appeal to the passion of fear, by frequent obscurity and suspense, and by an equal gloominess

¹ This § is intended only for reference. Those novels marked with an asteric (*) are contained in the 'Tauchnitz Collection'.

of scenery and characters. She wrote *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, *The Sicilian Romance*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* etc.

John Galt (1779—1839) wrote admirable novels depicting Scottish life, as *The Ayrshire Ploughman*, *Annals of the Parish* and some others, with a *Life of Bacon*.

Lady Blessington (1790—1849), the friend of Byron in Italy and the author of *Conversations with Lord Byron*, wrote a number of novels representing the "roman de société" *par excellence*. Her heroes are actual persons of the great world, reflecting the manners of the time. *Meredith**, *The Follies of Fashion*, *The Victims of Society*, *The Confessions of an Elderly Lady*, *Strathern, or, Life at Home and Abroad** may be considered as the best representatives.

Lady Morgan (1783—1859) offers vivid sketches of Irish life in *The Wild Irish Girl*, *O'Donnell*, *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys*.

Miss Mitford (1786—1855). Her novels are charming pictures of English homes and of American life. They are pervaded by a fine humour and written in a delightful style. *Our Village*, *Country Stories*, and *American Stories for Young People* are the best known.

Mrs. Shelley (1797—1851), second wife of the poet Shelley, wrote *Frankenstein*, a wild and thrilling story of a student who discovers how to create a living being. He makes a hideous thing, which becomes his terror and tormentor through all his life. — Other sensational novels of hers are *Valberga*, *The Last Man*, and, besides, an historical novel, *Perkin Warbeck*.

S 98.

HISTORIANS.

William Roseoe (1753—1831) published *The Life of Lorenzo de Medici* (1796), one of the most popular works of the day, and *The Life and Pontificate of Leo X.* (1805), which, from the delicate nature of some religious questions he had to treat in it, did not meet with the same enthusiasm. His style is graceful and pleasing.

Dr. John Lingard (1771—1851), the Roman Catholic historian of England, has written a *History of England from the Invasion by the Romans till the Abdication of James II.* He claims the merit of having collected his materials from original historians and records, and treats his subject with rigid impartiality with the only exception of the English Reformation.

Henry Hallam (1771—1851), "the most judicious of modern historians", wrote three great works in which he has laid down vast stores of knowledge: *View of Europe during the Middle Ages* (1818), *Constitutional History of England* (1827), and a comparative history of Literature, called *Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the 15th, 16th and 17th Centuries* (1837—39), a wonderful monument of erudition. His political views are those of the Whig party, yet delivered with calmness and moderation.

CHAPTER XI.

II. THE VICTORIAN AGE, 1830 until the present Day.*

§ 99.

The present age may be called the most barren of English literature; all sources of poetry in particular seem to have been dried up.

With the beginning of the Victorian era, the genuine poetic spirit, reawakened in the preceding age, began to recede before the mighty influence of materialism and formality, which blighted the finest blossoms of ideality. Only at times, a transient poetic flame, kindled by the breath of liberty, religion, and romanticism, spread its quickening rays, whilst prose-writing obtained a decided prevalence.

At no time was the English Theatre so insignificant and desolate, as in the present day. Comedy still enjoys a certain prosperity, but of the lowest sort. Representations of sensational, coarse realities, absurd and silly farces fill the stage and attract the applaus of a common, uneducated audience. The best of these plays are generally made up after French or German originals.

The literary character of this last period manifests itself chiefly in a superabundant production of works of fiction in the shape of novels, which brings much female talent into activity. Novel-writing has become the most valued and most important branch of modern English literature and has no little contributed to spread sound common sense, good breeding, and a mass of practical information throughout the nation. The historical novel, created by Walter Scott, found able cultivators. On the basis of some historic events or characters, the development of the plot or intrigue is conducted, investing history with the magic light of romanticism.

In Science, too, England has become one of the leading countries, being, however, no little influenced by German thought and investigation. Here, the first place is occupied by Historical writing, which has attained to its highest perfection in following the impulse given by the German historian Niebuhr. The palm must be assigned to Macaulay (v. § 118), who has

realized the ideal of true historiography, by combining poetry and philosophy in one and the same work of art.

Besides, natural philosophy, theology, philosophy, politics, and arts have called forth numerous valuable works and treatises which, along with their scientific value and influence, have enriched English literature to a great extent. Many of those works have, under the name of Essays, appeared in literary magazines and reviews, giving a powerful impetus to the development of "belles lettres", and acting as a sort of mediator between scientific research and popular instruction. They have ever been increasing in number and importance and represent, as it were, the quintessence of the intellectual condition of the nation.

Journalism, this powerful modern institution, has likewise risen to an unrivalled and universal influence, particularly since the liberty of the press has been fully recognized within the first years of Queen Victoria's reign. No rank or condition, however high or mighty, can escape its powerful rule or censure. It jealously guards the nation's rights, inspires the great mass of its widely dispersed citizens with common feelings and interests, spreads useful knowledge and information among all classes, and acts as a sort of public conscience in all questions of national or public importance and interest.

POETICAL LITERATURE.

§ 100.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING*, 1809—1861.

Elizabeth Barrett, the wife of the poet Robert Browning and perhaps the greatest English poetess that ever lived, was the daughter of a country gentleman in Herefordshire, who kindly encouraged her early efforts of poetry. She possessed a rare genius and a vast treasure of learning, acquired through wide and varied reading. In consequence of her fragile health, which at one time showed serious signs of consumption, she was sent to the watering-place of Torquay in Devonshire, where her delicate state of health was still aggravated by the sudden death of her younger brother, who was drowned in the bay before her eyes. She was removed to London, where she was long confined to a darkened room to recover her shattered

health; here she assiduously studied the classic authors in the original.

Her first poetical productions were *An Essay on Mind*, published when she was only seventeen years old, and *Prometheus Bound* (1833), a translation from Aeschylus. In 1844 appeared a collection of her poems in two volumes. When after her marriage in 1846 her health was failing again, she went with her husband to the milder climate of Italy, first to Pisa and then to Florence, where she spent the rest of her life, thoroughly sympathizing with the cause of liberty of her adopted nation, and where she died in 1861. There her dust is reposing.

Elizabeth Browning's principal poems are: *The Drama of Exile*, "a sort of complement to *Paradise Lost* in its reference to the experience of Eve, borne down by consciousness of guilt, yet ennobled by self-sacrifice"; *Casa Guidi Windows*, depicts with a passionate and moralizing fire the stirring events of the years 1848 and 1849, which the poetess witnessed from the windows of her lodgings; *Aurora Leigh*, one of the finest flowers of romanticism, is the greatest and most mature of her poems, rich in beautiful and noble thoughts, but often obscure and unintelligible. It is a modern novel in blank-verse, describing in varied strains of passionate poetry the maiden life of a poetess struggling against the conventional constraints of society and finding the solution of all the riddles of human life only in love; *The Cry of the Children*, a pleading for the little sufferers, which has done much to alleviate the lot of the poor factory children. Of her smaller poems the most notable are: *Seraphim*, *Lady Geraldine's Courtship*, *Conper's Grave*; *Bertha in the Lane*, *The Duchess May*, and *The Song of the Shirt*, which all appeared in the above mentioned collection of 1844.

The poetess also published a number of *Sonnets*, so-called translations from the Portuguese, which are among the best of her productions.

Elizabeth Browning's poetical genius ranks very high through its rare intellectual vigour and its imaginative and creative power, which ranges throughout the whole scale of human feelings, from the profoundest to the most sublime, yet ever pervaded by a tinge of sadness and intense subjective feeling, showing great affinity to the poetry of Shelley and the present Laureate. Her poetical diction is not always smooth and calm, but often rugged and at times without rhythm, not unlike the

state of her own personal feelings with regard to poetry: "I never mistook pleasure for the final cause of poetry, nor leisure for the hour of the poet."

§ 101.

ALFRED TENNYSON*, 1809—

Alfred Tennyson, the present poet-laureate, is the son of a Lincolnshire clergyman, and the youngest of three brothers, all of whom have written poetry. He opened his poetic career in 1829 when still at the University of Cambridge and barely twenty years old, by winning the Chancellor's medal with a poem on the dry and prosy subject of *Timbuctoo*. In the following year, he published a collection of miscellanies, entitled *Poems, chiefly Lyrical*, and in 1833 established his reputation by a second volume, containing *The Miller's Daughter*, *The Lotus Eaters*, and *The Queen of the May*, which, though meeting with a severe criticism, undoubtedly belong to his most graceful productions. After a silence of nine years, the poet again appeared before the public with two volumes of poems of great original beauty, including *Locksley Hall*, *The Gardener's Daughter*, and *Lady Clara Vere de Vere*, *Morte d'Arthur*, and *Godiva*, of which the first is the most finished, full of passionate grandeur and intensity of feeling; the last two exhibit charming proofs of the minstrel's superior skill to touch the lyre in honour of a by-gone age of a chivalry and romanticism. *Godiva* may be considered as the most charming of the poet's smaller poems. Henceforth all scruples and critics were silenced; Tennyson had climbed the lofty height of the "King of Song", being admired and caressed by all and imitated by many.

Tennyson's next poem was *The Princess* (1847), and exquisite and tender narrative of enchanting playfullness in blank-verse. It contains the story of a young princess who at first refuses to marry, but is conquered while tending the sick and the wounded.

The year of 1850 was to be of great concern in the poet's life. Wordsworth died, and the laureateship was now offered to him with general consent and applause. The official poem, which the new poet-laureate produced on this occasion, was the monotonous, yet stately *Ode on the Death of Wellington*. By a second death, that of his intimate friend and companion, Henry Hallam, son to the historian, the sensitive poet was deeply

affected. After recovering from his great loss, he breathed his profound love and grief in beautiful strains of vast sympathy, assimilating the whole universe with the memory of his departed friend. *In Memoriam**, was the common title under which these sweet, affecting songs, amounting to the number of one hundred and twenty-nine, were presented to the world.

To the best of Tennyson's longer poems belong *The Idyls of the King**, treating of the time and adventures of King Arthur and his Court at Carleon, a subject by which even Milton was attracted for a time.

The work consists of four detached poems:

"The first contains the story of Enid, riding in her faded silk before her cruel lord; Elaine is the name of the heroine of the second book; it contains the tragic story of the unrequited love of the innocent heroine of the matchless, handsome, but guilty Sir Lancelot du Lake; Vivien in the third book, is the treacherous beauty, another Delilah, who casts her spells round the old wizard Merlin, to shear him of his strength; and lastly Guinevere, Arthur's guilty queen, we see lying in an agony of remorse at the feet of Arthur, her tear-wet face crushed close to the convent floor, and her dark, dishevelled hair almost hiding her, while the noble forgiveness of the injured king and his sad farewell pierce her guilty soul."

Other poems, touching the same subject, are *The Holy Graal* and *Sir Galahad*.

To the finest of his smaller poetic tales belong *Enoch Arden**, a touching tale of humble life, showing how nobility of thought and heroic resignation may dwell in simple hearts; *Aylmer's Field*, and *Dora, an Idyl*. Mention must still be made of the *Cradle Song*, *Break, break, break!* and *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, one of the most popular of English poems.

Tennyson has also published several dramas. *Mary Tudor*, *Harold*, and *The Falcon*, which are not equal to his other works wanting dramatic life and beauty of language.

Tennyson has spent a great part of his life in a quiet and charming retirement in the Isle of Wight, maintaining an intercourse with a few chosen friends.

His poetic muse is of the loftiest and noblest order, combining profound, contemplative thought with rich and varied feelings, and a consummate skill of the poetic art, although without the soul-stirring power of the poetry of Shakespeare and Byron. His compositions, though in the main of an elegant simplicity, embrace the vastest range of matter and form: from the proud epic, to "the simplest utterance of emotion in a song";

from the feudal and fabulous ages, to the miscellaneous society of the present day. He is equally excelling in the domains of tender and quiet affection as in the realms of sublime and powerful emotions; he, in fact, is so much the true poet "by nature and vocation", that he never published one line in prose. In nobility of personal character and universal popularity he has been rivalled only by Sir W. Scott.

§ 102. 3

ROBERT BROWNING*, 1812—

Robert Browning, the head of the so-called psychological school of poetry and the husband of Elizabeth Barrett Browning (v. § 100) and one of the most original poets of modern English literature, was born at Camberwell, London. He studied at the University of London, and, twenty years old, made a journey to Italy, where he thoroughly occupied himself with the study of Italian life and history. He later adopted Italy as his second country, and resided for twenty years at Florence. Although of a high poetic genius, he failed in cultivating the dramatic muse, from his great predilection for metaphysical contemplations which renders the understanding of his works most difficult.

His drama *Paracelsus* (1836), in the form of a dialogue, attempted a justification of this scientific charlatan by lending him some traits of the nature of Faustus, but proved a failure from over-subtlety and copiousness of thought; and so did the following: *Pippa passes*, a graceful dramatic phantasy, forming part of a series called *Bells and Pomegranates* (1841—44). Pippa is a girl from a silk-factory, who passes the various persons of the play at certain critical moments, in course of her holiday, and, unconsciously to herself, becomes of determining influence on the fortune of each; *Strafford*, an historical tragedy, *A Blot in the Scutcheon* (1843), the most successful of the poet's plays, and *Sordello*, perhaps the best representative of his obscure style of conception and treatment. His next drama was *King Victor and King Charles*; altogether Robert Browning has written eight plays and two short dramatic sketches, *A Soul's Tragedy* and *In a Balcony*.

The two narrative poems *Christmas Eve* and *Easter Day* are of a religious-philosophical character, full of grotesque imagery, vivid painting, and careless, faulty versification.

In 1855, the poet's reputation was greatly enhanced by the publication of *Men and Women*, a collection of fifty poems, lovely pictures of Italian art and scenery, and in 1864 by another collection, *Dramatis personae*. The most important of his works, however, and one of the finest creations of English poetry, *The Ring and the Book*, appeared in 1869, a gigantic dramatic poem in twelve books, embodying his knowledge of Italian life and manners, but requiring the most sustained attention of the reader. The subject of the Book is the record of a Roman case of murder, which the poet discovered on an old bookstall in Florence, the Ring represents the leading aim and spirit of the poem — the insufficiency of human intelligence of sifting and stating evidences with respect to matters of fact or current events.

Two series of *Dramatic Idyls*, which appeared in 1879 and 1880, preserve but the outward form of the drama, with no trace of development of characters.

Quite in disharmony with his other productions is one of the poet's pieces of lighter poetry, *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* (Hameln), a *Child's Story*, told with an inimitable liveliness and spirit in a natural flow of amusing rhymes and quaint fancies.

Browning's poetry, which according to his own words is "lyrical in expression but dramatic in principle", is reckoned among the finest of modern English literature, although it never will become universally popular from its subtle metaphysical reasoning, obscurity of thought, quaint mannerism of language, and a want of congeniality with English intellectual and social life. He is too philosophical, where he ought to be poetical, too abstract and mystical to be enjoyed and understood. In his passions, he oversteps the bounds of decency, disregarding the laws of conventional rules and customs. According to him, "Love is the only good in the world." Yet his poetry is abounding with deep poetic and philosophic ideas, generally clad in a most expressive language.

§ 103.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE*, 1837—

This most powerful and original poet after Byron was born at Holmwood near Henley-on-Thames of a noble family of Danish origin. He was a fiery, stubborn, and restless boy, and after having spent part of his youth in France, was brought

up at Eton College; then he studied at Oxford, distinguishing himself in classics. The reading of Tennyson's poetry and a journey to Switzerland and Italy were decisive on his future poetic career.

His poetic works are dramatic, epic, and lyric. The dramas are inferior to his other poems, although written in beautiful and powerful language. The first was *The Queen Mother and Rosamund* (1861), which passed almost unnoticed. His best dramatic creation, however, *Atlanta in Calydon* (1864), modelled after Aeschylus and of great dramatic and lyric force, was of a determinate effect. Then followed *Chastelard* (1865), a romantic tragedy representing some repulsive episode of the life of Queen Maria in the light of reality. It contains vivid and startling delineations of character and highly tragic incidents. *Bothwell*, a gigantic drama of 500 pages, the weakest, but rich in beautiful poetic passages, and *Maria in Prison* complete the trilogy. The last of his dramas, *Locrime*, appeared in 1887.

Among his epic and lyric poetry, foremost stands a *Collection of Poems and Ballads* (1866), glowing psychological pictures abounding with emotional fervour, which, however, have been violently censured by English critics. Then appeared *Songs before Sunrise* (1871), *Songs of two Nations* (1875), glorifying the ideal of the French Commune, *Songs of Italy*, in which the poet identifies himself with the cause of Italian freedom, and *Songs of the Springtides* (1875). In *Dolores*, a powerfully touching glorification of the pleasures and pains of love, the poet has exhausted the resources of his realistic and luxurious genius, provoking the most virulent criticism. *Tristram of Lyonesse* (1883) treats a mediaeval subject in a powerful and impassionate language.

As a critic, Swinburne has signalized himself by a volume of *Essays and Studies* (1875), comprising a brilliant but unfair *Essay on Byron* together with a selection of his works, *A Study on Charlotte Brontë* and another on *Shakespeare*, in which he throws new lights upon the older English drama.

Swinburne, besides, is a clever writer of French verse.

Swinburne's poetry is of an extreme revolutionary spirit, both in politics and religion, breathing a fervid enthusiasm for liberty and a staunch opposition to English customary views of morality, for which he has been vehemently assailed. Apart from a certain want of concentration, his poetic muse excels in

rich luxuriant fancy, powerful, poetic and felicitous expression, a dazzling virtuosity of versification, and a wealth of glowing pictures. His dramas, which are interspersed with highly pathetic choruses, exhibit correct and classic characterisations; his lyrics abound in impassionate strength, flowing melodiousness of verse, and great sensuality, which has gained for his poetry the significant appellation of the "fleshy school".

§ 104.

MINOR POETS.

Bryan Waller Procter* (1790—1874) wrote under the fictitious name of Barry Cornwall, formed by anagram of his own name. He was educated at Harrow at the same time with Byron, and chose the profession of law which he practised in London, his native city, where he afterwards obtained an office as commissioner in Lunacy, which he held until 1861. He won his literary reputation chiefly as a poet, but he was also a successful prose writer. His first publication, *Dramatic Scenes and Other Poems* (1819), was succeeded in the following year by two beautiful tales, *A Sicilian Story* and *Marcian Colonna* (1820); then appeared his tragedy *Mirandola* (1821), which obtained great success, and in 1832 a volume of *English Songs** containing 172 graceful little dramatic songs, which will secure his name. Among the finest of them are the poems: *London*, *The Sea-Fight*, *King Death*, and *The Sea*. A second edition with new additions appeared in 1851. In 1852 he published his *Essays and Tales in Prose** and later several memoirs, among which that of *Charles Lamb*. He also published an annotated edition of Shakespeare. As a poet, he possessed a pure and delicate taste, a beautiful fancy, and a fine musical diction.

His daughter, *Adelaide Anne Procter* (1825—64), has made herself known as a poetess by her *Legends and Lyrics* (1858), of which a new edition appeared in 1870, and *A Chaplet of Verses*.

§ 105.

Caroline Norton (Miss Sheridan) (1808—1877), the grand-daughter of Richard B. Sheridan, occupies a prominent rank among the female poets of the present era. Endowed with a ready wit, rich and lively fancy, she early began to write poems full of warm and passionate feeling. Her marriage at the age of twenty with George Norton proved unhappy and

was followed by a separation. She tried her pen on the highest subjects, and not without success. After *The Sorrows of Rosalie* (1829), a touching idyl, she produced her greatest work, *The Undying One* (1830), an original conception of the legend of the wandering Jew, who never grows old, but is condemned to mourn at the graves of all he loves. Then appeared *The Dream* (1840), *The Child of the Islands* (1845), a vivid representation of the defects of English social life, and *The Lady of la Garaye* (1861), the finest of her poetic works. Of a particular charm are the lyric songs with which she interspersed her epic songs.

Of her novels the best are *Stuart of Dunleath* (1851), a dark tale, *Lost and Saved* (1863), and *Old Sir Douglas* (1868). Caroline Norton also took an active and successful part in the improvement of the legal rights of married women.

§ 106.

Matthew Arnold (1822—1888), son of the famous headmaster of Rugby, poet, critic, and philosopher, and great friend of Germany, was one of the prominent contributors to the present English literature. He studied at Oxford, was appointed inspector of schools in 1851, in which capacity he exercised a wholesome influence, and in 1857 professor of belles-lettres at Oxford, which post he resigned in 1874.

His first poems, *The Strayed Traveller and other Poems* (1848) and *Empedocles on Etna and other Poems* (1853) appeared anonymously. Then he published *Merope* (1858), a tragedy in the antique style, *New Poems* (1868); a complete edition of his poems appeared in 1877 in two volumes. His poetry seems to be much overvalued, treating but one ever varied subject, "the divorce between the soul and the intellect and the depth of spiritual yearning which that divorce produces".

As an essayist he ranges very high. Among other works he published *On Translating Homer*, recommending the hexameter, *Essays in Criticism* (1865), *Culture and Anarchy* (1870), *St. Paul and Protestantism* (1870), *Last Essays on Church and Religion* (1877), *Mixed Essays* (1879).

Much is due to Matthew Arnold for the improvement of English education by his reports on foreign educational establishments, especially by his work on *Higher Schools and Universities in Germany* (1874), where he had been commissioned by the English government, to examine their systems of education.

§ 107.

Edward Robert Bulwer-Lytton (1831—), son of the great novelist (v. § 112), poet, critic, and statesman, was educated at Harrow and studied at the University of Bonn. Already in his eighteenth year he entered upon his diplomatic career, alternately residing as attaché and since 1874 as ambassador in all the great cities of Europe. In 1876 he was appointed vice-roy of India, in which high dignity he directed the great pageant of the Queen's proclamation as Empress of India, and the two Afghanistan wars; in 1880 he laid down his high functions and retired to private literary life; he now is again British ambassador in Paris.

In 1824 he had published his first volume of poems, comprising *Clytemnestra*, *The Earl's Return*, *The Artist*, and other poems under name of Owen Meredith. Being favourably received, they were followed by *The Wanderer, a Collection of Poems in many Lands* (1859), *Lucile* (1860), a graceful tale, *Tannhäuser, or the Battle of the Bards*. Another collection of poems appeared under the title of *The Poetical Works of Owen Meredith* (1867) which was followed by *Chronicles and Characters* (1868) and *Orval, or the Fool of Time Fables in Song* (1874) and *King Pappy* (1877), another collection of poems. In his later works every style of poetry is essayed, however, not reaching the tenderness and beauty of his earlier poems.

The Ring of Amasis, a novel, appeared in 1863.

§ 108.

DRAMATISTS.

Thomas Talfourd (1795—1854), a dramatic poet and miscellaneous writer, wrote several tragedies, of which *Jon*, a classic play of a somewhat tedious length, and *The Massacre of Glencoe* deserve to be mentioned.

James Sheridan Knowles (1784—1862), an excellent actor, published a number of historical dramas, skilful compositions of great pathos, as *Caius Gracchus*, *Virginius*, *William Tell*, and *Alfred the Great*, some tragedies of little value, and some fine comedies, among which *The Love-Chase* and *Old Maids* are the best.

Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803—1849) wrote two tragedies of great force: *The Bride's Tragedy* and *Death's Jest Book, or the Fool's Tragedy*.

Mary Russell Mitford (v. § 97) (1786—1855) is the author of several dramas, *Rienzi*, *The Vespers of Palermo*, and *Foscari*, among which the first is the most important and interesting.

Douglas William Jerrold * (1803—1857), more known by his social novels (v. § 111) and his humorous sketch *Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures*, wrote a number of comedies and farces, of which *Paul Pry**, *Black-eyed Susan* and *Fighting by Proxy* deserve a prominent rank.

Joseph Sterling Coyne (1805—1868) produced some popular pieces, among which *The Bad Lovers*, *Black Sheep*, and *The Water Witches* are to be mentioned.

Sir Henry Taylor (1800—) has earned great reputation by his *Philip Van Artevelde* and *Edwin the Fair*.

Charles Reade (1814—) is a clever adapter of his own novels and successful translator of foreign dramas.

Dion Boucicault (1822—) is a most fertile writer of comedies, whose popular *Rip Van Winkle* is but a scenic adaptation of W. Irving's pretty tale.

Thomas Robertson (1829—1871) wrote *School*, an adaptation of a German comedy by Benedix, '*M. P.*', a witty satire on the English parliamentary elections, *Society*, directed against purse-proud upstarts.

Henry James Byron (1835—), the most popular, abundant, and unscrupulous manufacturer of comedies, farces, and melodramas, librettos, parodies and "extravagances", has chiefly contributed to the degradation of dramatic taste and writing in England. Above a hundred plays have been issued from his productive pen, of which *Our Boys* and *Married in Haste*, are the most known, having already had more than 1400 representations at the Adelphi-Theatre.

Novelists.

§ 109.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY*, 1811—1863.

Thackeray was born at Calcutta where his father held an office in the Indian Civil Service. Upon his father's death, the boy was sent for education to England and placed at the Charterhouse, where he acquired a certain fame for writing parodies. In 1829 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, which he left in the following year. Evincing a great inclination towards studies of art, he went to the continent and spent some time at Weimar, where he was introduced to the Court and the aged poet Goethe. Coming of age, he got into possession of the handsome fortune of £ 20 000 which enabled him to pursue his artistic studies in Rome and Paris, but which he lost after his return to England through bad management and the failure of a newspaper speculation. Then he took to literary occupation, and under fictitious names contributed to "*Frazer's Magazine*", tales, criticisms, and poems of an original cast, distinguished

for humour and brilliancy of style. Among his numerous contributions, *The Hoggarty Diamond* ranks the highest.

In those days, Thackeray spent much of his time in Paris. In 1840 he published his *Paris Sketch Book*, in 1841 he became an active contributor to "*Punch*", just founded; in 1843 followed his Irish *Sketch-Book*, and in 1844, after a tour to the East, a little book called: *A Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo*, with self-drawn sketches. This last showed his name for the first time in print.

Thackeray's popularity and fame, however, date from the publication of his great novel, *Vanity Fair*, which from 1846—48 appeared in monthly numbers. It met with a universal applause and assigned his rank among the first writers of English fiction. It is "a novel without a hero, but with two heroines", the famous "*Becky Sharp*", personifying intellect without virtue, and the insipid "*Amelia Sedley*", representing virtue without intellect. The story is of a high moral tone, abounding in gentle sarcasm and humour and narrated with a vivid reality.

Then followed *Pendennis* (1850), "the modern Tom Jones". It is the story of a young scamp who after a loose and gallant life, takes to novel-writing, in which he is successful, and after makes his way in fashionable life. *The Newcomes* (1853), the author's most popular novel, treats of the miseries arising from "forced or ill-assorted marriages". *Esmond* (1854), colonel in the Queen's Service, revives the times of Queen Anne and the first Georges, and resuscitates the most prominent personages as Swift, Addison etc. It is besides a curious work for reproducing the language of the last century. Its sequel, *The Virginians*, appeared about five years later.

In the mean time, Thackeray had delivered lectures on *The English Humourists of the 18th Century**, which he re-delivered in Scotland and America, and on *The Four Georges*, attracting the finest and most learned society by his brilliant and profound criticism and his humorous and graceful delivery. In 1859 Thackeray undertook the editorship of the *Cornhill Magazine*, till the year 1862. He continued writing for it until his sudden death on the 24th of December 1863.

Thackeray, although the greatest satirist after Swift, was of a kind and generous heart, free from all envy and malice. "He was a man in all the qualities of intellect, but a child in all the qualities of the heart." Fine humour, tender feeling, and a childlike simplicity and playfulness, constitute the main

features of his writings, which he aimed against the foibles and lesser sins of society. His refined and graceful style is ever cast in a poetical form.

§ 110.

CHARLES DICKENS*, 1812—1870.

Charles Dickens, the most popular of modern novel-writers, was born at Portsmouth, where his father held an office in the Navy-Pay-Department. When the boy was about five years old, his father removed to London¹, where he became a parliamentary reporter; four years after, he went to Chatham, but soon back again to London, where he was imprisoned for debt. The sickly boy's education, scanty and irregular during this time of instability, was entirely broken off upon this mournful juncture; barely nine years old, he had to gain his life by menial work among the lowest class of youthful fellow-labourers. However, this sad school of experience was to turn to his benefit; for his later life-like portraiture of humble existences and low characters were drawn from these juvenile recollections. Upon the release of his father, he once more enjoyed the blessings of schooling. This finished, he entered a solicitor's office, which occupation, however, being distasteful to him, was renounced in favour of the post of a parliamentary reporter, for which he had been preparing by learning stenography.

At this period of life, Dickens tried his pen upon a more independent literary task: he sketched the varied scenes of London life, of which he had not only been an acute observer, but oftentimes an unwilling participant. It was with an overjoying heart, he saw himself in print for the first time in the "Old Monthly Magazine", into whose letter-box he one morning had timidly dropped the manuscript. It was the first of those interesting *Sketches* by Boz*,¹ which afterwards were collected and published in a separate volume. At twenty-two, Charles Dickens was already a popular author, and a few years later, his literary fame was firmly established by the *Pickwick-Papers*, a composition upon a similar plan, viz., the portraying of a number of original characters, vaguely connected

¹ "Boz" was a little sister's maimed pronunciation of "Moses", by which Dickens, whose fancy was filled with the Vicar of Wakefield, used playfully to call his younger brother.

by an original idea: the comic adventures and ludicrous situations of a party of Cockney sportsmen, to which the illustrations were to be furnished by the artist Seymour, who not long after the commencement committed suicide. This work, which is written with ever-sparkling humour and unsurpassing fidelity, created an immense enthusiasm, and was read with delight by all classes of society. All his following novels were eagerly welcomed by the public; Charles Dickens had become the most popular novelist of the day.

In 1836 Dickens married, and in 1843 he undertook a journey to America, accompanied by his wife, and was received with enthusiasm and great honours. On his return, he gave great offence to the Americans by his *American Notes for General Circulation*, a caricature of American life and manners. The keen attacks of the American press, he answered by *Martin Chuzzlenit*, a second and still more biting satire upon American yankeeism.

As "the poor man's friend", whose first and noblest aim it was to give joy to the oppressed and sorrowing, and to prompt to acts of benevolence, Dickens had formed the idea of regularly presenting the public with an annual Christmas novel, which appeared from 1843 till 1847, and were headed by *A Christmas Carol**, undoubtedly the best of his productions. It is the story of an old, unfeeling miser, who is haunted by frightful appearances of ghosts, till he repents and turns a better man. Upon a tour to Italy with his whole family, he composed *The Chimes**, a pleading for the poor, and afterwards *Pictures of Italy*, and *The Cricket on the Hearth**, one of the most popular narratives of this group.

His next undertaking was the foundation of a periodical, *The Household Words*, in which he treated social problems in a popular form, and which still enjoys a wide circulation under the new title of "*All the Year Round*". One of its offerings was *A Child's History of England**, exhibiting a condensed yet attractive view of the growth and the vicissitudes of the English nation till the time of William of Orange.

Dickens also distinguished himself in an eminent degree as a public Reader or Lecturer, both in England and America, producing the most thrilling effects upon his audience by his "measured, sonorous, and emphatic delivery".

Upon a morning in June 1870, death seized him, pen in hand, at his country-place Gadshill, near Rochester.

Most of Charles Dickens' novels were written with the visible aims of a social reformer, exposing the defects of public systems, practices, and institutions to blame and ridicule.

Nicholas Nickleby is considered as one of the finest of his works. It exhibits the scandalous and brutal system of education in a wretched Yorkshire school and proved a meritorious, public benefit. *Oliver Twist* was designed "to expose the secrets of the London slums" (back-lanes), with a side-cut on the defects of the Poor-Law system. *Master Humphrey's Clock* is properly a coherent series of tales among which *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge* stand out foremost. The former depicts the fatal and irresistible powers of the temptation of gambling in an old man, and contains the exquisite creation of "Little Nell", the sweetest of Dickens' female characters; the latter is a curious and fictitious story connected with the Gordon Riots in London 1780. *Dombey and Son* illustrates the life of a purse-proud merchant, *David Copperfield*, the finest of his novels, that of a young literary man struggling for fame. It is generally regarded as containing the author's biography. In *Bleak House*, the author strongly pronounced himself against the existing practice of long and time-involving proceedings in the Courts of Chancery, and in *Little Dorritt* against the unjustifiable system of imprisonment for debt.

The style and spirit of Dickens' writings are highly imaginative and humorous, and their tone is of unblemished morality. Inspired by a fervent sympathy with human sorrows and miseries, especially with the sufferings of the lower orders, all his works are pervaded by a philanthropical and reformatory tendency, which has worked in the most refreshing manner towards the spread of better and nobler feelings for the poor man's conditions. In this noble task he was aided by the remembrance of his past vicissitudes, by his keen sense of observation, especially for the ludicrous in characters and situations, and by his fine talent of minute and vivid description, which not seldom, however, led him to caricature and straining for effect.

§ 111.

CONTINUATION OF NOVELISTS.¹

Benjamin d'Israeli (1804—1881), England's Prime-Minister, has furnished a considerable number of novels depicting high-life and partly

¹ Vide note § 97.

politics, written in a half bombastic, half trivial style, among which *Coningsby**, is the most important. Other novels are *Vivian Gray**, *Venetia**, treating the lives of Byron and Shelley in disguise, *Sybil**, *Lothair**, and *Endymion**, the least sympathetic of all.

Giovanni Domenico Ruffini (1807—1882), an Italian by birth, wrote some delicate and touching novels, as *Doctor Antonio** and *Lorenzo Benoni**

Samuel Warren (1807—1877). His novels, almost too realistic, verging towards caricature, are marred by bitter sarcasm and caustic satire against wealth and aristocracy. His *Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician**, *Ten Thousand a Year**, and *Now and Then** are the most known.

Charles James Lever (1806—1872) produced humorous, easy-reading novels, particularly painting Irish life, as in *The Irish Dragoon*, *The Daltons**, *The Fortunes of Glencore**, "Tom Burke of Ours"*, *Charles O'Malley**, *One of Them*, and in his greatest work of a serious character, *That Boy of Norcott's*.

Samuel Lover (1797—1868) belongs to the best of Irish novelists. His finest novels are *Handy Andy*, *Rory O'More*, and *Legends and Stories*.

Douglas Jerrold (1803—1857), the skilful dramatic writer (v. § 108) produced two excellent novels, *St. Giles** and *St. James** treating London life.

Charles Reade (1814—18) wrote some powerful moralizing novels treating social wrongs and reforms. The most popular are *It is never too late to mend**, *Take Care whom you trust*, *Put yourself in his Place**, *Love me little, love me long**, *A Woman-Hater**, and *The Cloister and the Hearth**

Anthony Trollope (1815—1882), a most copious author without any well-defined plan, but possessed of great talents for elegant, realistic description of the upper-society, particularly for conversation, that most difficult part of novel-writing. The best of his novels are *The Warden**, *Barchester Towers**, *Framley Parsonage**, *The Three Clerks* and *Orley Farm**

Thomas Hughes* (1823—), the great friend of the young, has given them two charming novels, *Tom Brown's School Days** and *Tom Brown at Oxford*, exact, realistic pictures of English public-school and University life, written in a happy and healthy tone. Some of his other novels are *Alfred the Great* and *Our Old Church*.

Wilkie Collins (1824—) is the most effective of the "sensational novelists", who by his exaggerated though skilful descriptions & developments of plot and characters both fascinates and terrifies his readers. Mysterious, undiscovered crimes and well-contrived suspense are the machinery with which he obtains his stirring effects. Of his numerous novels *The Woman in White**, *The Moonstone**, *No Name**, *The Law and the Lady** *The Dead Secret** are the most read.

Richard Blackmore (1825—), an imaginative and interesting writer, relieving his realistic pictures of English country life with fine word-painting and poetical touches. His best novel is *Lorna Doone*. Other novels of his are *The Maid of Sker* and *Alice Lorraine**

Thomas Hardy (1840—) is a novelist of marked reformatory tendencies regarding social and political problems. *Far from the Madding Crowd** has placed him in the foremost rank of the present novelists.

There are besides to be mentioned *Desperate Remedies* and *The Wind of Destiny*.

William Black (1841—), a highly talented novelist, who in fine poetical prose and correct colouring effectively describes life in the Hebrides. *A Princess of Thule**, *White Wings**, *Macleod of Dare** and *After the Sunrise* are the finest of his works.

James Payn (1850—) is a clever, fanciful novelist who has written some most fascinating novels of the sensational sort, the best of which is called *By Proxy**.

The Historical Novel.

§ 112.

EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON*, 1803—1873.

Bulwer-Lytton was the third son of General Bulwer of Haydon Hall, Norfolk. Already at a youthful age, he gave indications of poetic talents. After a private education he studied at Cambridge, where he graduated. On the death of his father, he succeeded to his mother's estate and assumed her maiden-name Lytton. His life was one of the most active, successful, and esteemed. As a literary man, he afforded a rare instance of fecundity and versatility, whose main strength lay in the domain of prose fiction. His first attempts at metrical narrative *O'Neil the Rebel*, and *Falkland* (1827), a novel conceived in the Byronic spirit, passed almost unheeded; but his next production, *Pelham* (1828), which relates the adventures of a fashionable gentleman in a witty and sarcastic style, established his fame as a novel-writer, which constantly increased in proportion to his improvement in plot, moral spirit, and execution.

Lytton, besides, claims a conspicuous place as a poet, a dramatist, an essayist, a translator, and an historian; he has also won great honours as a politician and an orator. He became a member of Parliament, received the title of baronet, was elected Rector of the University of Glasgow, held the post of Secretary of State under Lord Derby, and was raised to the peerage in 1866. He died in 1873 near Torquay, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Amongst Bulwer-Lytton's novels, three groups may be distinguished, indicative of the successive progress of his narrative skill.

His earlier novels, of unsound and unnatural tendency, exhibit a marked sympathy with illustrious criminals, so the *Disowned* (1828); *Devereux* (1829), the purest and least tainted with this morbid sentimentality; *Paul Clifford* (1830), in which sensitive pickpockets and highwaymen lament the condition of society; *Eugene Aram* (1831), the most powerful, is founded upon the history of a murderer who, after having long been tutor in the family of the writer's grandfather, is at last detected and arrested the moment before his marriage with a noble-minded lady.

Of a higher tone are Lytton's historical novels. *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834) resuscitates the life and manners of the ancient Romans, the brilliant mystic rites of Egyptian paganism, and the sufferings of the early Christians; *Cola Rienzi, The Last of the Tribunes* (1835), one of the author's finest novels, opens a sad page of the history of Rome, when intestine broils and wars between the powerful feudal families held their terrible sway in the noble city. *Harold* represents likewise a mournful period of English history of the Saxon times; *The Last of the Barons* a similar picture of the turbulent life during the "Wars of the Roses".

In *The Caxtons* the author opened a succession of domestic novels, known as the *Caxtonian Series*, in which his narrative and descriptive powers are brought out in their highest perfection. They are charming pictures of English family life and characters, rivalled only by those of W. Scott. To this third group belongs *My Novel*, generally admitted to be the best for variety of characters and enchanting descriptions of rural life and scenery. *What will he do with it?* is another skilful picture of English life and society.

Other successful novels are *Ernest Maltravers, Alice, Night and Morning*. Among Bulwer's less successful works are *The Pilgrims on the Rhine*, *Zanoni*, a confused mystical romance, *England and the English*, of a descriptive character and not without some autobiographical interest, and *The Parisians*, published after the author's death, contains descriptive sketches of Parisian life and sentiments before and after the siege of Paris in 1870.

Among Bulwer's dramatic pieces, several belong to the standard acting plays, as *The Lady of Lyons**, *Richelieu** and *Money**.

Bulwer's poems are chiefly satirical. He also must be mentioned as the translator of Schiller's *Poems and Ballads*.

Bulwer-Lytton possessed a rich and abundant imagination and a refined intellect. To this, he joined an acute knowledge of human nature and a great talent for narration, which latter he rendered more fascinating by an expressive and natural tone of language, animated by a pointed and spirited dialogue.

§ 113.

CHARLES KINGSLEY*, 1819—1875.

Charles Kingsley, born at the vicarage of Holne, Devonshire, was educated at various schools and at last at Magdalen College, Cambridge, where he graduated with high honours. He became a curate and then rector at Eversley in Hampshire, then in 1859 Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, in 1869 Canon of Chester, and from 1873 till 1875, the year of his death, held the same dignity at Westminster, London. He manifested his genius by a dramatic poem, *The Saint's Tragedy*, founded upon the story of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. On the outbreak of the French Revolution, he endeavoured to transfuse Christian life into the masses, and published *Alton Locke, Tailor and Poet, an Autobiography*, (1850) dictated by a thorough sympathy with the labouring classes, and trying to solve the problem of the pernicious system of competition among the artisans, touching besides many other and similar calamities. *Yeast*, (1848) particularly exposes the grievances of the field labourers. *Hypatia* is a brilliant picture of ancient Alexandrine life, when the decaying poetic philosophy of Paganism died under the rude blows of ascetic and fanatic Christianity. Hypatia is the name of the interesting, lovely female Philosopher who is torn to pieces by the Christians in 415 A. D. *Westward Ho!*, the finest of his productions and likewise an historical novel, revives the great naval heroes of the Elizabethan time and their fortunes, as W. Raleigh, Drake, and Hawkins, and the glorious defeat of the Spanish Armada. *Hereward the Wake* is a graphic representation of the high courage and simple faith of an heroic Englishman.

Besides other novels, Kingsley composed a number of essays of a religious and meditative character, and a series of *Lectures on Alexandria and her Schools*, which he delivered at Edinburgh.

Yet Kingsley also ranks high as a poet; the most refined of his poetical works is *Andromeda*, written in hexameters, perhaps the best specimen of that difficult measure in the English language, published with other *Poems* in 1858.

Kingsley's style is elaborate and brilliant, and all his writings are pervaded by a philanthropical spirit.

George Payne R. James (1801—1860) was one of the most voluminous writers of historical novels and of some historical and biographical works. He published about 200 volumes. *Richelieu* was his first, *Lady Montagu's Page* his last novel; others are *Morley Ernestine**, *Arrah Neil**, *The Smuggler**.

William H. Ainsworth (1805—1882), a most fertile writer of good antiquarian scholarship, chiefly treated subjects of London and its surroundings, as in *The Tower of London*, *Old St. Paul's*, *The South-Sea Bubble**, *Guy Fawkes*, *Windsor Castle**, *St. James** etc.

George Macdonald (1824—), also a writer of poetry, highly religious in tone, excels in works of fiction of a somewhat artificial character as in *St. George and St. Michael**, *Robert Falconer*, *The Vicar's Daughter**, *David Elginbrod**, *The Gifts of the Child Christ**, *The Princess of Curdie** and others.

Henry Kingsley (1830—1876), brother of Charles Kingsley, distinguished himself in his *Old Margaret*, *Ravenshoe**, *Leighton Court**, *Number Seventeen* and other novels.

The Traveller's and the Sea-Novel.

§ 114.

CAPTAIN MARRYAT*, 1792—1848.

Frederick Marryat, standing foremost in the list of novelists portraying sea-life, has enriched the English literature with about thirty amusing and interesting novels of uncommon popularity. He was born in 1792, entered the navy at fourteen, distinguished himself during the Napoleonic war, and rendered great services in the Burmese war, for which he was made commander of a ship at the age of twenty.

His first novel, *Frank Mildmay or Adventures of a Naval Officer* (1829), finding great favour with the public, he poured forth a rich succession of narratives depicting with faithful reality and effervescent humour the gay life, daring deeds, and stirring adventures of sea-faring men. The most attractive are *The King's Own** (1830), *Newton Forster* (1832), *Peter Simple** (1834), the most amusing and most popular of his novels, full of humour and drollery, *Jacob Faithful** (1834), *Mr. Midship-*

*man Easy** (1836), *The Pirate and the Three Cutters** (1836) and *Poor Jack* (1840).

Novels for children are *Masterman Ready* (1841), *The Settlers in Canada** (1843) and *The Children of the New Forest** (1847).

Marryat's first and highest aim was to produce amusement, which he fully obtained by his keen sense of the ludicrous, and his inexhaustible invention of odd and original characters, grotesque extravagances, and ludicrous events, told in the easiest and most fascinating style and with an ever-flowing wit and humour, which render his narrations attractive not only to the young, but even to "children of larger growth".

They have been translated into many languages.

His daughter Florence inherited some of his talents (v. § 116).

James Morier (1780—1849) in his *Hadji Baba*, *Zohrab*, *Ayesha*, *Abel Allnuth*, *The Mirza*, and *The Banished*.

Rowcroft gives vivid pictures of Australian life in his *Tales of the Colonies* and *Adventures of an Emigrant*.

Mayne Reid (1818—) wrote fascinating stories of adventure and exciting descriptions of fights with the Indians, chiefly intended for boys, as the *Rifle Rangers*, *The Scalp Hunters*, *The Boy Hunters*, *The White Chief*, *The Quadroon*, *The War Trail*.

Frederick Chamier (1796—1820) wrote *The Life of a Sailor*, *Tom Bowling*, *Trevor Hastings* etc.

Female Novelists.

§ 115.

GEORGE ELIOT* (MISS EVANS), 1819—1880.

George Eliot, an authoress of rare genius, whose maiden name was Mary Ann Evans, was born at South Farm, a mile from Griff, in the parish of Colton, Warwickshire, where her father was a land-agent. At fifteen she lost her mother; and when her elder sisters married, she remained alone with her father, and applied herself with great fondness to linguistic studies, taking lessons in Greek and Latin, French, German, and Italian, and teaching herself Hebrew; she also took intense delight in music. She was particularly well versed in German literature and felt a high admiration for the great German writers, especially for Goethe. Her literary occupations brought her into relation with George Lewes (v. § 119), to whom "she joined

her life by a faithful bond". When Lewes died in 1879, she was married to an old devoted friend in the following year, but died already at the end of it after a short illness.

George Eliot began her public literary career by her *Scenes of Clerical Life* 1856 consisting of three separate and interesting stories. With the appearance of *Adam Bede* (1859), she took her front rank among English novelists, especially through her striking descriptions of English country-life and faithful delineations of character. Then followed *The Mill on the Floss*, *Silas Marner*, *Romola*, an historical novel of stirring interest, depicting the highly agitated intellectual life in Florence at the time of Lorenzo de'Medici, with the commanding figure of the ascetic reformer and martyr Savonarola in its centre and all the eminent leading personages in church and politics, arts and sciences grouped around. Other novels are *Felix Holt*, *The Spanish Gipsy*, a dramatic narrative in blank-verse, representing an attractive picture of the long struggles between the Spaniards and the Moors; *Middlemarch*, *Daniel Deronda*, and *The Legend of Juval*, a fine narrative on the subject of Cain and his children.

George Eliot's novels display an uncommon variety of scenery and a great knowledge of social customs in different ages and nations. They, besides, excel in wonderful studies of real life and human characters as well as in a rich play of humour and pathos and a highly finished style. This and their moral value raise them highly beyond the common mass of kindred productions, although their psychological digressions and detailed descriptions make them unfit for superficial readers.

§ 116.1

Miss Harriet Martineau (1802—1876) has by her numerous works successfully attempted to spread clear notions on subjects and questions of great social import, by which "she has done more good than any man". She also has greatly contributed to the introduction of "free trade" into England. As her best novels may be named *The Hour and the Man*, *Deerbrook*, *Life in the Sick-Room*, *The Billow and the Rock*, and *Laws of Man's Nature*.

Miss Charlotte Brontë* (1816—1855), who wrote under the "nom de plume" of Currer Bell, gained high renown by her somewhat too sentimental novel *Jane Eyre**. It is written in an attractive style and full of powerful and touching descriptions, yet improbable in plot and characters.

Mrs. Gaskell (1822—1865). Uniting fine imagination and deep feeling with a delicate and playful humour, she depicts the life of happy,

¹ Vide note 97.

modest society and the sufferings of the working classes. Among others she wrote *North and South**, *Ruth**, *Silvia's Lovers** and a *Life* of the preceding authoress.

Eliza Lynn-Linton (1822—) . The best of her attractive novels of correct psychological painting are *The True History of Joshua Davidson** and *The Atonement of Leam Dundas**

Mrs. Oliphant (1820—) is a fertile and excellent writer of novels treating British domestic life and manners, with acute observation and striking reality. Among her best are *Merkland*, *Harrie Muir*, *Katie Stewart*, *The Athelings*, *Lady Crofton*, *The House and the Moor*, *Heart and Cross*, and her chief work *The Chronicles of Carlingford** with its continuation *The Perpetual Curate**, describing the life in a small country-town. She also wrote a *Literary History of England* (18th and 19th century).

Mrs. Henry Wood (1820—) , a most fertile writer of an inferior order, revelling in horrible scenes and dark deeds and characters. Some of her most popular novels are *East Lynne**, *The Channings**, *The Shadow of Ashlydyat**, *Lord Oakburn's Daughters*.

Miss Yonge (1823—) a fertile author especially of novels for the young (v. § 117) and of a deep religious character. There may be mentioned in this place *Hopes and Fears**, *Heartsease and Brother's Wife**, *Lady Hester**, which belong to the best of her works.

Miss Julia Kavanagh (1824—1877) cultivated the so-called family novel, but of a somewhat stirring, sensational stamp in *Daisy Burns**, *Grace Lee**, *Nathalie*, *Dora**, and *Sybil's Second Love**

Lady Charlotte Bury shows a realistic and satiric bent in *A Marriage in High-Life* and in *Memoirs of a Peeress, or the Days of Fox*.

Mrs. Trollope (1778—1863), mother of Anthony Trollope (v. § 111). Satiric like the preceding writer, she offered wholesome entertainment in her novels drawn from life, although sometimes slightly coarse. She wrote *Charles Chesterfield, or the Adventures of a Youth of Genius*, *Widow Barnaby*, *The Blue Bells of England*, *Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy*, *Jessie Philips*, and a great number of other novels.

Miss Dinah Muloch (Mrs. Craik) (1826—) , the charming writer for youth (v. § 117), writes an easy kind of fresh and humorous novels of which *John Halifax, Gentleman* occupies the first place. Other popular novels of hers are *A Life for a Life**, *A noble Life**, *Two Marriages**, *Mistress and Maid**, and *The Women's Kingdom**. She also wrote several volumes of essays, including *Studies from Life** and a volume of *Poems**

Miss Jean Ingelow (1830—) occupies a prominent rank with her novel *Sarah de Berenger** and a volume of *Poems**, entitled *The Little Wonderhorn*.

Miss Braddon (1837—) ranks rather low in literary value. With an incredible dexterity she produces numerous novels of a thrilling un-aesthetic nature, filled with all imaginable crimes, vices, and horrors, and exercising a bad influence on the present literary taste. Their arrangement, though most effective, is but of the grossest invention. Most known are *Aurora Floyd**, *Henry Dunbar**, *John Marchmont's Legacy**, and *Lady Audley's Secret**

Miss Florence Marryat (1837—), daughter of Frederick Marryat (v. § 114) contributed a great number of excellent novels to nautical literature, as *For ever and ever**, *Fighting the Air**, *A Lucky Disappointment**, *My own Child**, *Under the Lilies and Roses**.

Oulda (Miss Louisa de la Ramée) (1840—), an adherent of the French school, offers true pictures of Italian life, but in a somewhat negligent and bombastic style, and of a questionable morality, manifesting a great predilection for doubtful female characters. There are to be mentioned of her numerous novels *Strathmore**, *Idalia**, *Under two Flags**, *Signa, In a Winter City**, *Ariadne** which marks the height of her activity.

Miss Anne J. Thackeray, daughter of William Thackeray (v. § 109), is a clever writer of novels which are likely to last. She wrote *The Story of Elizabeth**, *Miss Angel**, *Out of the World**, *Da Capo** and others.

Miss Georgina Craik published *Lost and Won**, *Faith Unwin's Ordeal**, *Two Women** and other novels.

§ 117.

NOVELS FOR THE YOUNG.¹

Miss Dinah Mulock (Mrs. Craik v. § 116), author of *John Halifax, Gentleman**; *Three Tales for Girls; Ruth and her Friends; His Little Mother**; *Two Little Tinkers**; *My Mother and I**; *The Laurel Bush**; *The Unkind Word**; *Plain Speaking**; *A Brave Lady**; *A Noble Life**; *Our Year**; *Three Tales for Boys**; *The Little Lame Prince**.

Miss Yonge (v. § 116): *Henrietta's Wish, or Domineering; The Prince and the Page; The Two Guardians; Friarswood Post Office**; *Kenneth, or the Rear-Guard of the Grand Army**; *The Little Duke; Ben Silvester's Word**; *The Stokenley Secret**; *Countess Kate**; *A Book of Golden Deeds**; *The Lances of Lynwood**; *The Pigeon Pie**; *P's and Q's**; *Bye-Words**; *Lads and Lasses of Langley**; *Sowing and Sewing**; *The Daisy Chain**; *The Trial**; *The Heir of Redcliffe; The Young Stepmother**; *The Chaplet of Pearls**; *Love and Life**; *The Dove in the Eagle's Nest**; *The Caged Lion**; *The Castle Builders; Three Brides**; *My Young Alcides**.

Miss Florence Montgomery: *Misunderstood**; *The Towncrier, and the Children with the Indian Rubber Ball, a Christmas Story**; *The Blue Veil; Thwarted*.

Miss Florence Marryat (v. § 116): *A Little Stepson**; *Phylida*.

Mrs. Henry Wood (v. § 116): *William Allair, or Running away to Sea**.

Anthony Trollope (v. § 111): *Dr. Wortle's School**; *The Mistletoe Bough; Alice Dugdale**; *Orley Farm**; *Rachel Ray**.

Miss Mitford (v. § 97): *Country Stories; American Stories for Young People*.

¹ Vide note § 97.

Mrs. Oliphant (v. § 116): *A Rose in June**; *Phoebe, Junior**.
Miss Amelia B. Edwards: *Barbara's History**.
Lady Fullerton: *Ellen Middleton**; *Daisy Chain*.
Elliot Warburton: *The Crescent and the Cross**; *Darien**.
Lady Barker: *Stories About**.
Louise Charlesworth: *Ministering Children**.
Miss Georgina M. Craik: *Cousin Trix and her welcome Tales**.
Miss Maria Edgeworth (v. § 96): *Moral Tales**; *Popular Tales**.
Bridget and Julia Kavanagh (v. § 116): *The Pearl Fountain**.
Charles and Mary Lamb (v. § 94): *Tales from Shakespeare**.
Emma Marshall: *Rex and Regina, or the Song of the River*.
Mrs. Whitney: *A Summer in Leslie Goldswaithe's Life*.
Charles Egbert Craddock (Miss M. Murfree): *In the Clouds. Down
the Ravine*.
Justin McCarthy: *Dear Lady Disdain**; *Miss Misanthrope**.
T. Henry Shorthouse: *John Inglesant*.
J. Habberton: *Helen's Babies and other People's Children**.
Mrs. F. H. Burnett: *Little Lord Fauntleroy*.
Miss Cummins: *The Lamplighter**.

Novels particularly for Boys:

Captain Marryat (v. § 114): *Masterman Ready, or the Wreck of
the Pacific*; *The Settlers in Canada**; *The Children of the New Forest**;
The Pirate and the Three Cutters; *The King's Own**; *Frank Mildmay*;
*Midshipman Easy**; *Jacob Faithful**; *Japhet in Search of a Father**;
*Peter Simple**.

Besant and Rice: *The Seamy Side*; *The Golden Butterfly**; *The
Monks of Thelema*; *The Chaplain of the Fleet*; *This Son of Vulcan*; *With
Harp and Crown*; *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*; *Ready-Money Mortiboy**;
*The Revolt of Man**.

Cooper (v. § 136): *The Deerslayer*; *The Pathfinder*; *The Pioneers*;
*Two Admirals**; *Jacko' Lantern**; *The Last of the Mohicans*; *Homeward
Bound*; *The Headsman*; *The Bravo*; *The Borderers*; *The Spy**.

R. M. Ballantyne: *The Coral Island*; *The World of Ice*; *The Young
Fur Traders*; *The Wild Man of the West*; *The Dusty Diamonds*; *The
Horseman in the West*; *The Floating Light*; *Dog Crusoe and his Master*;
The Gorilla Hunters; *The Pirate City*; *Erling the Bold*; *Black Ivory*;
Red Eric; *Hudson Bay*.

Kingston: *Three Midshipmen*; *Three Lieutenants*; *In the Eastern
Seas*; *Snow Shoes and Canoes*; *South Sea Whaler*; *Three Admirals*; *Saved
from the Sea*; *Manco the Peruvian Chief*; *First Voyage to Southern Seas*;
In the Wilds of Africa; *The Missing Ships*.

Mark Twain (v. § 138): *A Tramp Abroad*; *Tom Sawyer*; *Prince
and Pauper*; *Innocents Abroad*; *Innocents at Home*; *Life on the Mississippi*;
Snowflakes and Sunbeams.

Mayne Reid (v. § 114).

Historians.

§ 118.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY*, 1800—1859.

Macaulay, the most prominent writer of modern English history, was of Scottish lineage and born at Rothley Temple, Leicestershire. His father Zachary was one of the most strenuous promoters of the abolition of the slave-trade. The boy, who possessed a marvellous capacity of memory, — he is said to have recited an entire Waverley novel by heart, — received his first and careful education at Bristol, then entered Trinity College, Cambridge, to study mathematics, signalizing himself by winning two medals for poems, and by his bright dialectic powers. Later, he prepared for the profession of the bar at Lincoln's Inn, and in 1825 won his first literary laurels by a brilliant essay on Milton, which appeared in the Edinburgh Review and opened that long series of elegant historical and literary essays, in which he has had no equal. In 1830 he entered upon his successful political career, first as a member of Parliament, distinguishing himself as one of the finest orators of the Whig party, especially on the question of the "Reform Bill", and in 1834 as a member of the Supreme Council of Calcutta and as President of the Indian Law-Commission. Upon his return to England, he was made Secretary at War and in 1846 appointed Paymaster General of the Forces. During this time, he had been sitting in Parliament for Edinburgh with the interruption of a few years which he devoted to literary activity, and in the first place to his *History of England*, until in 1857 he was raised to the peerage, in consideration of his eminent literary merits, when he took his seat in the House of Lords. He was not to enjoy his coronet for more than about two years; for he died on the 28th of December 1859 at Kensington, a suburb of London, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Macaulay has gained his great literary honours in the triple quality of a poet, an essayist, and an historian; his chief fame, however, rests upon the last, by which he inaugurated a new style of historical writing in his *History of England from the Accession of James the Second* which, though remaining a mere fragment, popularized his name throughout the whole civilized

world. The two first volumes, which appeared in 1849, were received with universal delight; and before the publication of the next two in 1855, eleven editions had already been issued from the press. The fifth and last volume, published in a state of incompleteness after the author's death, brings down the history till about the end of the reign of William III., thus only comprising little more than a dozen years of the one century and a half, originally contemplated by the author. The work is preceded by a contracted yet lucid survey of the growth of English nationality, and the whole falls little short of the ideal of a perfect history which, in the author's own words, is to be "a compound of poetry and philosophy, impressing general rules on the mind by a vivid representation of particular characters and incidents". This he has particularly attained through the accuracy and minuteness with which he disposes of the historical materials, and his fascinating, fresh, and picturesque style by which he outshone all former historians. His narration of the past excites the most novel interest; his portraits of characters are striking and animated, and his pictures and descriptions of scenes, customs, and manners are of great scenic and picturesque effect. "The work, indeed, is not so much an history, as a great prose epic, with William III. as hero, and the establishment of representative government as dénouement."

Macaulay's *Essays*, critical treatises on literary and historical subjects, suggested to him by the appearance of any new and interesting book on history or literature, are masterpieces of smooth and genuine English composition. The finest are those on Milton, Addison, Machiavelli, Horace Walpole, Pitt, Lord Clive, Warren Hastings, Bacon, and the Earl of Chatham.

As a poet, Macaulay distinguished himself by his *Lays of Ancient Rome** (1842) and other picturesque and descriptive poems and heroic ballads. In the former, he attempted to reproduce in the old ballad style and measure those ancient epic chants which are supposed to have been the earliest sources of Roman history. All his songs are of an energetic and impressive character.

Macaulay is undoubtedly the most elegant, pure, and luminous writer of modern English.

§ 119.

CONTINUATION OF HISTORIANS.¹

Sir Francis Palgrave (1788—1861), son of a German Jew, obtained leave, on marrying an English lady, to change his name, and was knighted in 1832 for his contributions to English history. His best works are *A History of the Anglo-Saxons* (1831), *Rise and Progress of the English Common Wealth* (1822) (meaning only an independent community, not the Common-Wealth of the 17th century), and *The History of Normandy and England* (1851—61).

Sir Archibald Alison (1792—1867), Sheriff of Lancashire, wrote *A History of Europe from the Commencement of the French Revolution* (1789) to the Restoration of the Bourbons (1815), which he afterwards carried on to *The Accession of Louis Napoleon* (1852), comprising eighteen volumes together. It is the completest English work on this epoch, and although not entirely exempt from errors, distinguished for its vast and profound research. Alison besides wrote *A Life of Marlborough* and a number of historical and political Essays.

George Grote (1794—1871), “the learned dilettante”, proprietor of a banking-office in London and one of the directors of the British Museum, prosecuted historical studies with so much success, that his great and elaborate work, *History of Greece*, which he accomplished under the guidance of his older friend James Mill, ranks with the best of ancient histories. It is treated in the spirit of modern historiography, depicting the social, political, familiar, and religious life of the Grecian people independently from the English point of view. His sympathies side with the Athenian democracy. George Grote died in 1871 and was honoured with a tomb in Westminster Abbey.

James Anthony Froude (1818—) wrote a graphic and eloquent *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey* (1529) to the Death of Elizabeth in twelve volumes, in which he treats Henry VIII. in a new light, trying to vindicate his character and to give a more favourable illustration of the social life under the reign of the Tudors. In many points, Froude sacrifices strict accuracy for the sake of greater dramatic effect, particularly in the struggle between the two ambitious queens Mary and Elizabeth. His second great historical work, *The English in Ireland*, is written in a strong Anglo-Saxon spirit and caused much bitter feeling among the Irish. Froude, besides, is the author of a *Life of Bunyan* and of *The Cat's Pilgrimage*, a book for children, full of fine humour.

Henry Thomas Buckle (1822—1862) was interrupted by his premature death at Damascus in the completion of his excellent *History of Civilisation* of which only two volumes are finished. It traces the development of national intellect from a splendid array of evidence, the result of vast and profound studies. In this splendid and spirited apparatus, however, one great agent is set at nought — the freedom of the human will.

George Henry Lewes (1817—1878), a versatile writer, historian, novelist, essayist, critic, and biographer, after having first tried the profession of a merchant and a physician. He rose to high literary honours by his *Biographical History of Philosophy* (1847) and his excellent work *Life of*

¹ Vide note § 97.

Goethe (1859), a worthy pendant to Carlyle's *Life of Schiller*. All his works, of which there may still be mentioned Comte's *Philosophy of the Sciences* (1859) and *Physiology of Common Life* (1865), have exercised a wholesome influence on the minds of the intelligent classes in England. He also wrote two successful novels, *RanBORPE and Rose, Blanche, and Violet*.

Justin McCarthy (1830—) wrote an *History of Our Own Times*, which may be considered as the best English work of actual history.

John Richard Green (1835—) has obtained an uncommon success with his *Short History of the English People* (1874), a philosophical treatise of civilisation, presupposing, however, sound historical studies. He has treated the same subject in the same style in a longer work, *History of the English People* (1877) in three volumes.

William Edward H. Lecky (1838—) has written some clever historical works: *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*, *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*, and *History of England in the XVIII. Century*.

Essayists and Philosophers.

§ 120.

THOMAS CARLYLE*, 1795—1881.

Thomas Carlyle was born of humble parents at the little village of Ecclefechan in Dumfries, Scotland. After his preparatory education at a neighbouring town's school, he went to Edinburgh University to become a minister of the Church of Scotland. Feeling, however, no true vocation for it, he relinquished these studies and left the University without taking any degree. He accepted several situations as a teacher for about two years, then went to Edinburgh and turned to literary occupation, writing articles for magazines and doing other pen-work. Here he also began his studies of German literature, and from an industrious scholar becoming an ardent admirer, resolved to disclose to his nation the true sense of its vast and healthy powers. He began with a paper on *Goethe's Faust*, (in the "New Edinburgh Review") in 1822, which was followed by a translation of *Goethe's Wilhelm Meister* (1824), his *Life of Schiller*, published entirely in 1825, and by his *Specimens of German Romances* (1827), selections from Goethe, Tieck, Jean Paul, Musäus, Hoffmann etc. Through the patronage of Jeffrey (v. § 75) he became a contributor to the "Edinburgh Review"; his first articles were on Jean Paul Richter and Burns. To secure his literary independence of opinion, he retired to a little farm, in "a wilderness of heath and rock, yet in the loveliest and loneliest nook of Scotland", keeping, however, a constant intercourse with

the literary world. So he entered upon a correspondence with Goethe, who wrote a preface to a German translation of his "*Life of Schiller*", and who regarded him as "the first Englishman who had found his way to the heart of German literature". In 1834 Carlyle removed to London, continuing his literary activity, and delivering a course of *Lectures on Heroes and Hero-Worship*, which created a great sensation among the fashionable literary circles, not only by the loftiness of the subject, but also by his quaint yet eloquent English with a Scotch accent. Here he died in 1881.

In his above mentioned seclusion from the world, Carlyle wrote the curious book *Sartor Resartus* (The Tailor Re-tailored), as a contribution to "Fraser's Magazine" from 1833—34. It is a satiric criticism called forth by a fictitious book of a German professor on clothing, by which the author understands the mere outside appearance of things and persons, the surroundings of life, by which we are generally deceived, but through which we must look, if we wish to know ourselves and one another, or, as he terms it, "the Divine Ideal".

The French Revolution (1837), generally regarded as the best of his productions, is quite an original and singular work for its peculiarities of style, its vivid and stirring descriptions of events, and the impressive explanations of their causes. In his *Heroes and Hero Worship* (1841), the author sympathizes with any individual man, of whatever type of thought or creed, who has known himself and the purposes of his life and "who has worked his will". The same sentiments dictated to him his last signal works, *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (1845), in which he produces this great man's character less from historical sources than from his own words and correspondence, which he collected with great industry "from far and near"; and *The History of Frederick the Great* (1850—65), another glorification of individual will, which is at the same time an excellent biography of this great monarch, an history of the German empire, and an account of the development and growth of the Prussian monarchy.

Carlyle was of a solitary bent, both in the manner of his life and style of writing. He possessed a "shy, self-conscious and pithy" mind, yet sympathizing with all men in their individual efforts, and fighting earnestly for the cause of truth against falsehood and hypocrisy. His style, like his genius, dislikes the fetters of common rules, often twisting and wrenching words

in an unnatural way — the effects of his close German studies, especially of Jean Paul; hence he is frequently quaint, obscure, and difficult to understand, so that he is often disregarded by his own countrymen.

§ 121.

CONTINUATION.

John Ruskin (1819—), a highly gifted and versatile writer, particularly on art and artists, has rendered art literature popular in England and exercised wholesome reforms in art and society. He is the son of a rich London wine-merchant, and studied painting. Not being successful in his art, he became one of the most popular, most elegant, and successful writers of the day. Among his numerous and meritorious works, the most important are *Modern Painters* (1843—60), in five volumes, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849—55), *The Stones of Venice* (1851—53) in three volumes, *Pre-Raphaelitism* (1851), which mainly contributed to liberate art from the academical fetters. His contributions to magazines are quite considerable. In 1861 a selection of his works was published in one volume, a treasure to all students and lovers of art. Ruskin is among the greatest masters of the English language: his style is luminous, lofty, and picturesque.

Mrs. Jameson (1794—1860) was the daughter of the Dublin painter Murphy and one of the most prominent writers on subjects of art and taste, whose works rank with those of Ruskin. Among them, the most noteworthy are *Characteristics of Women* (1832), in two volumes containing a fair estimate of Shakespeare's heroines, *Memoirs and Essays on Art, Literature, and Social Morals* (1846), *Sacred and Legendary Art* (1848) including *Legends of the Monastic Orders* and *Legends of the Madonna*. Her eloquent writings are full of feeling and fancy, exhibiting a cultivated, discriminating taste and stores of knowledge.

John Stuart Mill (1806—1873), who in his ninth year had read most of the Greek classics and, when but twelve years old, had acquired all the knowledge to be attained in schools and colleges without his attending either of them, occupies the first rank of modern English philosophers. In 1843 appeared his remarkable work, *A System of Logic*, professing to supersede

the Baconian principle of induction, and in 1859 his most important treatise *On Liberty*, which created a general enthusiasm. Among his other works, there may be mentioned his *Essays on Political Economy* (1844), *Utilitarianism* (1863), and *The Subjection of Women* (1869), in which he declares for the emancipation of women. Stuart Mill was a profound, independent thinker and expounds his views with clearness and candour.

Charles Darwin (1809—1882), the eminent naturalist and founder of the theory of "natural selection", studied at Edinburgh and Cambridge and accompanied Captain Fitzroy in his expedition for the survey of South America and the circumnavigation of the globe (1831—36), where he had rich opportunities of studying nature under new and interesting aspects. He published his results in the *Journal of Researches into the Natural History and Geology of the Countries, visited during the Voyage of the Beagle* (1839 and independently in 1845). But his greatest and world-famed work, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, appeared in 1859, expounding the theory of the gradual development of all plants and animals from a few primitive forms in the struggle for existence in which the strongest only survive. Although this theory has found great adherence, it has not remained uncontradicted, not being absolutely proved.

Other valuable contributions to natural science by Charles Darwin are *Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication* (1867), *The Descent of Man*, (1871) containing his much disputed theory of our relationship with the ape, *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872), *The Power of Movement in Plants* (1880) and a number of others. Darwin has expounded his theories in modest, clear, and calm language. His collected works have been translated into German by Carus (1875—78) in twelve volumes.

CHAPTER XII.

THE AMERICAN LITERATURE.*

§ 122.

Introduction.

Of all the nations which have sprung into existence through the medium of European colonization since the discovery of America, that of the United States of America is the only one having a healthy literature of its own creation and to which universal literature is indebted for works of a high order. Yet the existence of an independent national American literature can only be dated from the rise of the national spirit during and after the struggle for liberty and the establishment of the United States. All previous literary attempts were either imitations or borrowings from the great intellectual wealth of the mother-country. More than a century and a half was required, before the strong ties of sympathy and dependency between the two countries, riveted by a community of language, congeniality of thought and feeling, and relationship of race, could be weakened and finally severed. The space of time from the first landing of the Puritans in the "Mayflower" on the 21st of December 1620 till about the year 1815 presents two stages in the development of its political and social as well as its literary conditions, viz.,

The Colonial Period, 1620—1765 and

The Age of the Revolution, 1765—1815.

The time since elapsed comprises, properly speaking,

The National American Literature, from 1815 until the present Day.

§ 123.

THE COLONIAL PERIOD, 1620—1765.

The first of these periods was a time of great physical labour, by no means propitious for intellectual pursuits. Clearing forests, building houses, reclaiming tracts of uncultivated land, establishing schools and churches and other beneficial in-

stitutions, in fact the founding of a great nation was the task assigned to the first pioneers of civilization in New-England. "Instead of writing any great work, they were acting a still greater one: they were creating those very subjects upon which the future historian, traveller, essayist, poet might employ his pen for the delight and instruction of other generations." A grand majestic nature, the free life of hunters and bold discoverers in the mysterious forests and mountains of the west, the fights and dangers themselves against the wild beasts and ruthless natives, the struggles, toils, and sufferings of the earliest settlers, these became the sources of the future literature, the substitutes for the fabulous and heroic ages, rich in myths and legends, of other nations. With their stern and sober life and their talent for practical activity, these first Puritan colonists combined a glowing love for liberty, a warm sympathy for the beauties of nature, and an intense religious faith, which left their impress on the later works of intellect and fancy. Their intellectual life was intimately connected with politics and religion, and their democratic and sullen spirit reigned supremely in civil and private life, and overcast the whole age with a cheerless, melancholy gloom, averse to the cultivation of poetry, arts, and sciences. However, their bigotry and proneness to religious controversy, engendered the first literary productions: theological and political pamphlets and translations of scriptural parts, strongly impregnated with the peculiar views of this austere sect. Still less favourable to the development of polite literature was the hostile spirit of the Quakers who had found an asylum in North America on the banks of the Delaware under their leader William Penn in 1681.

The foundation of *Cambridge College* in 1636, later called *Harvard College* in honour of its great donor, John Harvard, and that of *Yale College*, in Connecticut, thus named after its benefactor, Elihu Yale, in the middle of the 18th century, became two powerful agents towards the rapid and general spread of intellectual culture.

The first book, published in America, was a metrical translation of the psalms, called the *Bay Psalm Book*, printed in 1640 by Daye. In the same year the poems of Ann Bradstreet, the first American poetess, appeared at Boston, and ten years later in England, where she gained the flattering appellation of "the tenth muse", although but few of her poems are above mediocrity.

From among the number of crude versifiers of the time, it is fair to mention Captain John Smith, whose quaint and rather humorous verses, entitled *Sea Marke*, rise but to the level of ordinary school-boy poetry.

Among the earliest prose writers the most remarkable was Cotton Mather (1663—1728), who may be considered as the representative and the most learned man of this time; he published no less than 383 works, which exercised a great influence on the public mind.

Another writer of prose, Dr. Edwards (1703—1758), stands deservedly foremost as one of the acutest and most powerful reasoners, whose works now rank among those of English metaphysics. His *Essay on the Freedom of Will* is an attempt to prove the Calvinistic dogma philosophically and is still read with interest.

§ 124.

THE AGE OF THE REVOLUTION, 1765—1815.

The work of colonization was done; numberless cities were arising, and the star-spangled banner of the colonies was waving on all the seas. Universities, schools, and colleges carried on the great work of civilization, political meetings and news-papers fostered the national feeling and prepared the way to an independent literature.

Yet in spite of the many good institutions of learning, it was the fashion, to a wide extent, of the wealthier colonists to send their sons to Great Britain for education, whence they returned with tastes more or less refined, particularly in language and literature, thus cultivating a pure and clear style and facilitating a beneficial transition from the theological to the more purely literary era of American authorship.

The struggles of the colonies with the French for dominion and power, and the final victories over them at Quebec (General Wolfe, 13. September 1759), and at Montreal in Canada, not only gained for them the vast and fertile territories of Canada and Florida (peace of Paris 10. February 1763), but likewise strengthened the union between the different colonies, and once for ever established the Germanic spirit of liberty and Protestantism over that of Roman subjection and Catholicism. The desire of shaking off the English tutelage was but a necessary consequence. At first silently endured, then received with mur-

murs of dissatisfaction, it was finally resisted with bold and manly courage. Under their great national hero Washington, this high aim was attained after eight years of a changeful struggle, and the new Republic securely founded upon the two main pillars of sound political life: *self-government* and *equality of rights*.

Yet one stain should disfigure this splendid national edifice, the execrable slave-trade. It was only in 1865 that Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation (1863) was sanctioned by the congress, whereby slavery was abolished throughout the United States and all places subject to their jurisdiction.

These great political, social, and intellectual movements had exercised a beneficial influence both on the language and literature. A clear and forcible expression characterizes the productions of this period, and the literary writings began to give evidence of a more decidedly national type than before. English wits were imitated, and by their influence the writings of America were much relieved from the heaviness of the Puritan spirit.

The most noteworthy of the poets of the time was Francis Hopkinson (1755—1791), the satirist of the Revolution, who censured the defects of American education. To the most known of his poems belong *The Treaty*, *The Battle of the Kegs*, and *The New-Roof*, with the burden: "Our government firm and our citizens free."

Joel Barlow (1755—1812), the inveterate foe of monarchy, in his *Vision of Columbus*, later enlarged into the *Columbiade*, treated the past and future of America.

Timothy Twight (1752—1817) wrote *The Conquest of Canaan*, monotonous and bombastic, and *Greenfield Hill*, a lovely idyl of American country-life, more successful than the former.

Among the writers of prose James Ralph fairly deserves to be mentioned, next to Benjamin Franklin (v. § 134), in this period; he is the author of *A History of England during the Reigns of William III. and Queen Anne*, a work of great acuteness and diligence. He was the only American who ever enjoyed a literary pension from the British crown.

Some efforts at dramatic composition were made in New-England during this period, although the Puritans forbade dramatic representation; however, nothing perfect was produced.

§ 125.

THE NATIONAL AMERICAN LITERATURE, 1815—

The new genius of independency, which pervaded the people, soon produced its noble traits by creating a universal and profounder culture, particularly in arts and national poetry. The conventionalism of European literature was cast aside and the first original works of American literature were produced. Still the pedantic and subtle spirit of Puritanism held its uncongenial sway and is perceptible to the present day by traces of hypocrisy and religious narrowness. Poetry chiefly consisted in rhymings upon God, virtue, Christianity, and biblical stories, till it gradually gave way under the influence of good English and German models. Another circumstance, characteristic of American literary life, and unfavourable to the full efflorescence of literature, especially of poetry, is to be found in "the hurry and bustle of life" and the highly developed "common sense" among the New-English, to which it must also be attributed that their poets do not represent a distinct class of individuals, but mere men of practical life.

Dramatic poetry* has found no propitious soil in New-England. Its most inveterate foe was the old Puritan spirit; nor can the unsettled conditions of the American nation be any way favourable to the development of the drama, the highest development of poetry. As yet, there exists neither understanding, sympathy, nor encouragement for this branch of poetry; the only successful plays are imitations of French, English, or German models, mostly of an insipid and noisy character. The first English theatre was founded in 1752 at Williamsburg in Virginia. Among the best dramatic writers, George H. Boker takes the first place by his three tragedies, *Calaynos*, *Anne Boleyn*, and *Francesca da Rimini*, and his clever comedy, *Widow's Marriage*. After him the names of Warner, *Gilded Age*, Bret Harte, *Two Men of Sandy Bar*, and William D. Howells, an imitator of French plays, stand out the first.

The most cultivated branch of American literature, like that of England, is Fiction or Novel-Writing among which the humorous novel occupies a prominent place. Historical Writing, too, has found able cultivators ranking with the best of modern historians.

Since the beginning of the present century, American litera-

ture has quitted the mere receptive character and manifested greater originality, a fact which has been even acknowledged by the English press. It has made wonderful advances towards excellence, not overlooking any subject of human knowledge, thought, or sentiment. A new style of thought has been developed, new scenes and views have been opened to the world, and Europe is receiving compensation in kind for the intellectual treasures she has heretofore sent to America.

POETICAL LITERATURE.

§ 126.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT*, 1794—1878.

This eminent poet was born at Cummington in Hampshire, Massachusetts, and, when only ten years of age, produced several small poems; four years later he composed a political satire, *The Embargo*, which created a great sensation, manifesting at the same time his uncommon poetical talents. After having gone through the usual preparatory studies and attended William's College, where he distinguished himself for his fondness for the classics, he entered a lawyer's office, and in 1815 was admitted to practice at the bar of Great Barrington. During all this time, he had not neglected the cultivation of the poetic muse whose irresistible charms finally prevailed upon him to resign his juridical career and to devote himself to the more congenial pursuits of literature. He went to New York and contributed to several literary papers, especially to the *New York Review*, until in 1826 he became the editor of the *Evening Post*, one of the oldest and most influential gazettes of America. In its columns he favoured all efforts of freedom and humanity during the war of secession, and manfully fought against the terrible disease of "corruption", then rapidly increasing. He visited Europe five times, once extending his journey even as far as Syria and Egypt. The results of these wanderings he laid down in his graceful and vivid *Letters of a Traveller in Europe and America* and *Letters from the East*. Bryant also acted as a public orator, as on the great festival of peace at New York after the Franco-German war. It was on a similar occasion, the unveiling of the bust of Giuseppe Mazzini in the Central-Park, when the aged poet broke down under the burning rays of a hot May-day, and died shortly after. Mourned

by the whole nation, he was buried in the cemetery of Roslyn, a little town of Long-Island, at the side of his dearly beloved wife, departed in the bloom of her life.

Bryant's finest poetry is of a reflective and descriptive kind, pervaded by a deep moral, religious feeling, without any traces of morbid sentimentality. With an enthusiastic admiration, he sings the sublime grandeur of nature and her manifold charms particularly displayed in American scenery. The finest poems of this class are *The Earth*, *A Forest Hymn*, *Hymn of the Sea*, *The Fountain*, *The Flood of Years*, *The Prairies*, *The Apennines*. Of a melancholy and devotional character are three highly prized poems, *Thanatopsis* (The Sight of Death), *The Waterfowl*, and *Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood*.

Bryant, in the second place, was the poet of patriotism and liberty which he celebrated in *The Ages*, *The Antiquity of Freedom*, and *The Year 1776*. He also tried his pen, not without success, on ballads and romances, as *The African Chief*, *The White-footed Deer*, and *Song of the Greek Amazon*.

In his old age Bryant translated the *Iliad* (1869) and the *Odyssey* (1876) into unrhymed heroic pentameter verse, which are esteemed very highly by many able critics.

Bryant was, no doubt, the greatest lyric poet of America. His poetic muse was not of a multifarious, yet of an original, sound, and noble kind, presenting the perfect type of the better parts of American life and spirit. His language is always beautiful and clear, his form elegant and correct.

§ 127.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER*, 1807—

This "pure apostle of freedom and right", sometimes called the "Quaker Poet", was born near Haverhill, Massachusetts, of a Quaker family. Until his eighteenth year, he remained at home, getting his first instruction at the district school and helping his father on his farm. This rural life strengthened his weakly constitution and opened his mind to the beauties of surrounding nature. Then he spent some time at the Haverhill Academy and sent occasional contributions, both in prose and verse, to several local papers, whereby he made his name favourably known, so that in 1828 he was called upon to undertake the editorship of the *American Manufacturer* at Boston, a paper defending the "protective tariff". After two years, he

gave it up and became the editor of the *New-England Weekly Review*, but dissatisfied with this sort of occupation, he returned home and published a volume of poems and prose sketches, entitled *Legends of New-England* (1831). In 1835 he was elected representative to the Legislature of his State, and in 1836 Secretary of the American Anti-Slavery Society whose principles he ardently defended as the editor of the *Pennsylvania Freeman*, a weekly paper published at Philadelphia. In 1840 Whittier removed to Amesbury where, with a few interruptions, he leads a retired life, ever watching with a lively interest the course of the development of his native country, and at times raising his poetic voice in tone of encouragement or censure to which the whole Union listens with respectful attention.

Whittier's chief poetical productions are lyric songs breathing a soul-stirring spirit of freedom and love of country, and a profound scorn against oppression and slavery in any shape whatsoever. Collections of this class are his *Voices of Freedom*, *In War-Time*, and *National Lyrics*. Love of nature and home have inspired the following: *Lays of my Home*, *Songs of Labor*, *The Panorama*, and *Home Ballads*.

The second group of his poems are epic-lyric songs, the earliest of which is *Mogg Megone* (1836), an Indian story describing the struggles between the first colonists and the Indians; *Cassandra Southwick*, which scourges the fanatic cruelty of the Puritans against the Quakers, *Snow-Bound*, *Maud Muller*, and *John Underhill*. Poems of a more elegiac character are *The Chapel of the Hermits* and *A Sabbath Scene*. Among his most popular poems are *Barbara Frietchie*, *The Barefoot Boy*, and *A Tent on the Beach*.

Whittier's personal character is of a noble and honest simplicity; he is the fair representative of the American spirit of liberty in its purest and most ideal form. Boldness, strength, and purity of will and effort are the leading characteristics of his poetry which rises from the soul, now fiery and powerful, now sweet and tender, yet ever warm for the cause of humanity. His language is keen and pithy, at times even rude and martial and defective in form.

§ 128.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW*, 1807—1882.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the son of an advocate, was born in 1807 at Portland, Maine. At the age of fourteen, he entered Bowdoin College at Brunswick, where he graduated in 1825. Before this time, he had already composed several poems which were printed in the "United States Literary Gazette". While practically preparing for the profession of the law, he was offered the professorship of modern languages in his own college, which he gladly accepted. But in order to prepare himself thoroughly for these new functions, he went to Europe in the spring of 1826, travelling and studying in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Holland, and England, and returned in 1829. In his leisure hours, he wrote his *Outre-Mer, a Pilgrimage beyond the Sea* (1835), a collection of travelling impressions, sketches, and miscellaneous essays, besides translations, especially from the Spanish. In 1835 he was elected Professor of Modern Languages and Belles-Lettres at Harvard-College, Cambridge, the oldest and most famous university of the United States. Before entering upon his new duties, he again went abroad to study the northern languages and literatures, spending more than twelve months in Denmark, Sweden, and Germany, where he had the misfortune of losing his wife at Heidelberg. After a tour through the Tyrol and Switzerland, he returned and took up his residence in the old Cragie House at Cambridge, renowned as the headquarters of Washington after the battle of Bunker Hill (17. June 1775). Here he wrote his *Hyperion*, a mixture of romance, literary criticism, and travelling description, in which he pays great honour to the German people, spirit, and literature.

In the year 1842, Longfellow made a third tour to Europe, and lived the whole summer on the Rhine, where he became acquainted with Freiligrath, the translator of many of his poems. On his voyage back to America, he composed his *Poems on Slavery*.

In 1854 Longfellow resigned his professorship, entirely devoting himself to his muse and leading a retired yet constantly active life, which was only interrupted once more by his fourth and last tour to Europe in 1868, on which he was presented to Queen Victoria at Windsor, and honoured by a

festival, at which Gladstone praised his merits as a poet. On a visit to the Isle of Wight, he made the acquaintance of Tennyson; and in the same year he was named D. C. L. (Doctor of Common Law) by the University of Oxford, and honoured with other distinctions from foreign learned societies. At the beginning of the year 1882, his health began to fail; a violent suffering terminated his life within a week on the 24th of March.

Longfellow was a most fertile writer of great versatility, particularly excelling in lyric and epic poetry, although inferior in the drama and the novel. His first collection of lyric poems, *Voices of the Night*, appeared in 1839, and was followed by *Ballads and other Poems* in 1841. Other collections of original lyrics are *The Seaside and the Fireside* and *Birds of Passage*, whilst in *Poets and Poetry of Europe* (1845) and in *Poems of Places*, amounting to about twenty volumes, the poet presents masterly translations of the poetry of almost all countries.

His chief epic-lyric poems are *The Belfry of Bruges* (1846), *Evangeline, a Tale of Acadia**, an idyl, relating in smooth hexameter verse the cruel expulsion of the French colony from Acadia by the English in 1755, and containing magnificent descriptions of nature; *The Song of Hiawatha**, called "the Indian Edda", is considered the finest and most original of his poems. It is composed in a novel and charming metre of trochaic verse, and reveals the myths of the red-skins, culminating in a highly fanciful personification of the forces of nature. "Hiawatha is a mythical personage of miraculous birth, believed by the North American Indians to have been sent among them to clear their rivers, forests, and fishing grounds, and to teach them the arts of peace". *The Courtship of Miles Standish**, also in hexameters, is another idyllic story of American life at the time of the Puritan settlement.

The first of Longfellow's dramas was *The Spanish Student** (1843), after a novel of Cervantes, called "Preciosa", describing the love-adventures of a student of Alcala and the beautiful gipsy Preciosa. Although of little dramatic value, it is highly attractive because of its abundant descriptions of Spanish peculiarities. The next was *The Golden Legend* (1851), a dramatic rhapsody in changing metre on the old legend of "the Poor Henry", exhibiting a vivid picture of the monkish and scientific life in the middle ages, and bearing a resemblance to Goethe's Faust. *New-England-Tragedies* (1868) and *The Divine Tragedy* (1871) make up a trilogy. These dramatic pictures

are not adapted to scenic representation, but abound with profound thoughts and high lyrical beauties.

Longfellow's narrative works are *Hyperion*, *Kavanagh*, a lovely and touching picture of idyllic life in New-England, and his *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1863), an imitation of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

Among his smaller lyric and descriptive poems, the following deserve particular mention: *Excelsior*, *A Psalm of Life*, *The Ladder of St. Augustine*, *The Reaper and the Flowers*, *Maidenhood*, *A Rainy Day*, *The Slave's Dream*, *The Village Blacksmith*, *The Hanging of the Crane*, *Morituri Salutamus*, and *The Building of the Ship*.

Longfellow has, besides, furnished excellent translations of poems of Goethe, Uhland, Heine, W. Müller, Platen, Mosen, and of Dante's *Divina Commedia* (1867).

The name of Longfellow is, no doubt, the brightest and most popular in the annals of American literature; for although his poetic genius does not shine in fervent outbursts of demoniac passion, yet it excels in the softer qualities, as depth and tenderness of feeling, nobility of thought, pure idealism, and a deep sympathy with all human feelings, often pervaded by a mystic, religious tone. His poetry comes from the heart; but ever striving to ennable and to idealize human life, he often falls into a moralizing tone by embodying some useful meaning or aim; "he often preaches when he should only sing". Owing to his delicate sense of the charms of nature and for a beautiful form, his poetry as well as his prose are rich in fine descriptive passages, whilst his language is pure, graceful, and correct, and his verse has a sonorous rhythm.

§ 129.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES*, 1809—

Oliver Wendell Holmes, the first of American humourists, equally distinguished in poetry and prose, and the most successful writer of poems for special occasions, was born at Cambridge, Massachusetts, studied the law and then medicine. After a sojourn of several years at Paris, he returned and settled at Boston to exercise the medical profession. But already in 1838 he received a professorship at Dartmouth College, and in 1847 at the Harvard University which he resigned two years after to devote himself entirely to literary activity.

Already in 1836 Oliver Holmes had published a volume of *Poems* which were followed by a series of other collections, as *Poetical Works*, *Soundings from the Atlantic* (1863), *Humorous Poems* (1865), *Songs of Many Seasons* (1874), *Wit and Humour*, and *The Iron Gate*. These poems met with great applause. They are quite of an original character, witty and humorous, at times satirical and pathetic, and filled with proverbs and brilliant epigrams like diamonds in golden settings.

His finest poetic qualities are best seen in *The Chambered Nautilus* and *The Living Temple*. Of his humorous poems *The Deacon's Masterpiece* and *Parson Turell's Legacy* are the best. *The Last Leaf* shows that the humourist can also be pathetic. *Old Ironsides* is a famous national lyric. Other favourite poems are *My Aunt Dorothy*, *Homesick in Heaven*, *Our Boys*, *The Silent Melody*, *The Dilemma*, *Under the Violets*. Some of these poems first appeared with his earliest prose works into which they were fitted with exquisite skill.

The genius of Oliver Holmes is versatile, if not of the highest order. In his prose writings his wit continually flashes forth and his fancy is ever on the alert. *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* contains some of his best writings in prose and verse. It is neither a volume of essays nor a novel, but a mixture of both. No single volume will give as good an idea of the author's style as this one. Two other volumes, *The Professor at the Breakfast Table* and *The Poet at the Breakfast Table*, complete the "autocrat series". He also wrote three novels: *Elsie Venner* (1861), *The Guardian Angel* (1867), *A Mortal Antipathy*, and a little volume of *Essays: Mechanism in Thought and Morals* (1870). His Life of Emerson (v. § 140) is one of the best volumes in the 'American Men of Letters-Series'.

§ 130.

EDGAR ALLAN POE*, 1811—1849.

Allan Poe, one of the unhappy poets, has been most contrarily judged: whilst he is considered as the greatest of American poets by some, he is quite disregarded by others.

He was born at Baltimore, Maryland, of respectable parents though leading the unstable life of players. Being left an orphan at four, he was adopted by John Allan, a wealthy merchant of Richmond in Virginia, who gave him a careful

education. His early impressions, however, combined with an ever-indulgent treatment, increased his naturally proud and turbulent disposition, which became the cause of his ill-fated life. In his fifth year, he accompanied his adoptive parents to England, where he remained five years at school. After his return, he attended for a short time the Academy of Richmond and then entered the University of Virginia, where he equally distinguished himself in his scientific studies, gymnastic accomplishments, and dissipated conduct. Expelled for the last, he led a wandering life in Europe and America: he served as a common soldier, acted as editor to several literary magazines, married his poor and beautiful cousin, was disinherited by his adoptive father, wrote poems and tales by which he gained prizes, and established his fame as an eminent original poet by the publication of his highly popular poem *The Raven*. After some years of a quiet and industrious life, he returned to his former unsettled mode of living, became one of the editors of a literary magazine, *The Broadway Journal*, which failed in the course of the first year, and entertained literary feuds with the great writers of the day. His lectures on poetry not being successful, he more and more abandoned himself to his irregular habits of gambling and drinking, and died miserably of the effects of carousing at Baltimore, when on his way to be married for a second time to a respectable lady. He was but thirty-eight years old.

Allan Poe is known as a writer of poems, tales, and criticisms. His chief poems are *The Raven*, a wild powerful phantasy, *The Bells*, a poetical and melodious imitation of the various chimes of the bells; *Annabel Lee*, *To One in Paradise*, and *To Helen*, the last three effusions of true poetic spirit and feelings.

All his verses are written with careful elaboration and evince his great mastery of language and a refined, melodious versification; their metre and structure are of an exquisite and artificial nicety. Not springing, however, from the depth of the heart but a glowing fancy, they are mostly devoid of dignity and the power of emotion. Most of his poems are, as he confesses himself, "the result of cold, mathematical calculation".

His novels, outpourings of a wild, unbridled fancy, as *A Manuscript found in a Bottle*, his prize-novel, *The Gold Bug*, *Adventures of Arthur Gordon Pym*, *Tales of the Grotesque and the Arabesque*, *The Fall of the House Usher*, *The Murders of the Rue Morgue*, *The Mystery of Mary Royet*, *The Pit and the*

Pendulum, *The Premature Burial* etc., display the real bent of his genius. Like grim, horrible visions of dark and ghastly nights, filled with blood and murder, those weird conceptions act all the more powerfully on the fancy by their minute detail and striking semblance of reality.

In his criticisms, Allan Poe was sharp and clear, but often unfair, being greatly influenced by "his petty spirit of fault-finding, a burning jealousy, and a self-complacent egotism".

§ 131.

BAYARD TAYLOR*, 1825—1878.

This great writer, poet, statesman, and tourist was born at Kennet-Square in Chester-County, Pennsylvania. He was brought up in the creed and the simple, honest manners of the Quakers, and at seventeen became apprentice in a printing-office, devoting his leisure time to the study of Latin and French and to the cultivation of poetry. His juvenile poems were published in some magazines and afterwards (1844) collected under the title of *Ximena*. Impelled by an irresistible desire for travelling, he set out on his first of that series of great journeys, which have made him one of the greatest travellers ever living. He wandered through England, Germany, France, Switzerland, and Italy, occasionally working in his profession when means were failing. Returned, he described his impressions and observations under the title of *Views Afoot*, which was favourably received at home and abroad. Then he settled in New York and became connected with the "Tribune" as a permanent contributor. In the same year (1848), he published a second collection of poems, *Rhymes of Travel, Ballads and other Poems*, which established his fame as a poet.

In 1849 Taylor visited California, and returned by way of Mexico, giving a most successful account of his travels, entitled "*Eldorado or Adventures in the Path of the Empire*." About this time he lost his young beloved wife, whom he had married only a few weeks before her fast approaching end. In 1851 he departed for his great Eastern tour passing through England, Spain, and Sicily to Egypt and Nubia, and thence to Asia Minor and Constantinople; after having visited some of the islands of the Mediterranean, he returned to England. In the following year, he started again for Bombay, and after a long tour through the interior of India, reached Calcutta, whence he embarked for

Hong-Kong, and then went with the American embassy to China. On the arrival of Commodore Perry's squadron at Shanghai, he joined this expedition to Japan which he explored, then returned by way of Canton to New York, having travelled more than 50,000 miles. The literary results of this long journey, he published in three entertaining works, *A Journey to Central Africa*, *The Lands of the Saracen*, and *A Visit to India, China, and Japan*. His next journey was directed to Sweden, Lapland, Norway, Russia, Poland, Greece, and Crete, which he described in the following books: *Northern Travel*, *Travels in Greece and Russia*, *At Home and Abroad*. In these descriptions, truth and fiction are agreeably blended; they are "pleasantly rather than correctly executed", owing to the wonderful rapidity with which he produced his numerous works.

During the years 1862 and 1863, Bayard Taylor lived as Secretary of legation at the court of St. Petersburg, and after this at his beautiful country-seat "Cedarcroft" near Philadelphia, employing his literary muse in the composition of novels, as *John Godfrey's Fortunes*, a story of American life, and *The Story of Kennett*, treating with great reality the idyllic life of his own birth-place. His other novels are *Hannah Thurston*, and *Joseph and his Friend*.

Two more journeys to Europe, another to Egypt and thence to Cashmir and Thibet, and one to Iceland on the occasion of the millennial jubilee, furnished materials for new volumes of travelling descriptions, entitled *Central Asia*, and *Egypt and Iceland*. In Germany he found his second wife, Maria, the daughter of the astronomer Hansen at Gotha. In the year 1878 Taylor was called to the high post of ambassador of the United States at the imperial court of Germany, where he soon gained the esteem and confidence of the highest circles. His premature death, however, in the month of December of the same year interrupted this active and beneficent existence. His body was conveyed to America and interred in the cemetery of Longwood, not far from Cedarcroft.

Bayard Taylor's numerous poetic works are chiefly lyrical and dramatical. Besides his above mentioned *Rhymes of Travel*, among which *The Bison Track* and *El Canalo* are the most interesting, he published other collections of lyric songs, as the *Book of Romances*, *Lyrics and Songs* (1851), *Poems and Ballads* (1854), *Poems of the Orient*, and *Poems of Home and Travel* (1855). Of his detached lyric poems some of the

sweetest and most touching are those in memory of his departed wife: "*Moan ye wild winds, around the pane*", *The Mystery*, and *The Phantom*. Besides *Lars*, a "Norseland idyl", must be mentioned as one of Taylor's finest poems.

His two greatest poems of dramatic form are of a mystic-philosophical character and unsuitable for representation. The first is *The Masque of the Gods**, an attempt to explain the mysteries of the divine omnipotence through poetry. In three acts it treats the transition of mankind from its crudest forms of pagan worship to the Hellenic glorification of harmony, grace, and beauty, and finally to the Christian doctrine of love combined with beauty. The gods of the various times and nations act as personages; the chorus is represented by mountains, rocks, and caverns, by seas, rivers, and trees, wolves and serpents. Man appears as the last. The poem is pregnant with the finest and profoundest thoughts.

The second poem of a like character, serving as a *pendant* to the former, is *Prince Deukalion*.* Its "central design or germinal cause" is to represent a picture of the struggle of mankind for the most perfect and most satisfying condition of life in this world. This process of development comprises two thousand years, divided into four ages or acts, the first representing the victory of Christianity over paganism, the second, the papal hierarchy, "the triple-hooded snake", the third, the imperious spirit of Church orthodoxy, and the fourth, the future perfect state of humanity enlightened by truth and freedom.

A third dramatic poem, *The Prophet*, takes its subject from Mormonism and glorifies the power of love.

§ 132.

MINOR POETS.

John Pierpont (1785—1866), a clergyman, composed many fine religious poems of ingenious measures, as *Passing Away*, *My Child*, pearls of true poetry. The most popular of his poetic productions is his ode, *The Pilgrim Fathers* (1820), composed on the anniversary of their landing at Plymouth (1620).

Richard Henry Dana (1787—1879), the excellant painter of nature and human character, full of poetic power and passion, who first displayed the romantic beauties of the primeval forests of his country. His two most celebrated poems are *The Buccaneer*, a phantastic sea-legend of glowing colours and power-

ful language, and *The Dying Raven*, a fine picture of nature, full of deep and sad meditation. *The Little Beach-Bird* is a fine gem of sweet, melancholy sentiment.

Charles Sprague (1791—1875), “the American Pope”, is particularly known for his *Ode on Shakespeare* (1823) and the *Centennial Ode*, celebrating the second centennial of the foundation of Boston, his birth-place. They both display great power of thought, metrical art, and a splendid diction. More original and therefore superior are his “domestic pieces”, as *The Brothers*, *I see Thee still*, *The Family Meeting*, and *The Winged Worshippers*, all abounding in sweet and touching melancholy and affection.

Joseph Rodman Drake (1795—1820) is most widely known through his *Culprit Fay*, a weird and fanciful creation, and *The American Flag*, a stirring national lyric.

James Gates Percival (1795—1856), excelling in richness of fancy, splendour of versification, and life-like descriptions full of sweet and touching pathos, has adorned his native literature by numerous fine poems, among which the best are *The Prevalence of Poetry*, *Consumption*, *Clouds*, *Morning among the Hills*, *To Seneca Lake*, and *New-England*, a patriotic poem, much known in American schools.

Fitz-Greene Halleck (1795—1867), a satiric poet, in his *Croaker¹-Papers*, composed in company with Jos. Rodman Drake, slashed the faults and foibles of the New Yorkers in the wittiest and most striking manner; *Fanny*, the longest of his poems, most delightfully ridicules the follies of the day with side-cuts on eminent personages. His *Marco Bozzaris* has been called a masterpiece of warlike poetry.

George P. Morris (1802—1864), “the song-writer of America” and founder of the well-conducted weekly paper *The Home Journal*, has enriched American and English poetry with many beautiful poems and ballads filled with deep moral sentiment and touching pathos, and highly cherished in both hemispheres. Among others, he has published the following poetical productions: *The Deserted Bride*, *The Whip-poor-will*, *American Melodies*, *National Melodies*, some dramas, and in conjunction with his friend and fellow-labourer Willis, an excellent book, *The Prose and Poetry of Europe and America*. The sweetest

¹ “Croaker” is one of the personages in Goldsmith’s comedy *The Good-natured Man*.

and most touching of his smaller poems are undoubtedly *My Mother's Bible*, *Woodmann, spare that Tree*, and *When other Friends are round Thee*.

Nathaniel Parker Willis (1806—1867), a popular poet of his time, wrote some very graceful and affecting poems. *Hagar in the Wilderness*, *The Death of Absalom*, *Healing of the Daughter of Jairus*, *The Dying Alchemist*, *Parrhasius*, and *The Wife's Appeal* are his best poems.

John Godfrey Saxe (1816—1887), the American Hood, is the author of *Progress, a Satire*, *The Proud Miss M'Bride*, *The Briefless Barrister*, *Pyramus and Thysbe*. His humour is not so refined as that of Holmes (v. § 129) and Lowell (v. § 140), but is abundant and readily perceived even by the dullest.

Walter Whitman (1819—) an original, independent, and peculiar poet is called the "champion of democracy". He glorifies the natural man, and in so doing frequently becomes coarse and sometimes indecent. *Leaves of Grass*, *Drum-Taps*, and *My Captain* are among his best productions.

Richard Henry Stoddard (1825—), an artistic and highly imaginative poet, has written several volumes of songs and lyrics of very unequal merit. *The Hymn to the Beautiful*, *The Burden of Unrest*, *The Fisher and Charon*, *The Dead Master*, *Hymn to the Sea*, *The King's Bell*, *Burial of Lincoln* show a delicate and varied poetic talent.

Paul Hamilton Hayne (1831—1886) was one of America's best sonneteers. His poems are characterized by rare delicacy, tenderness, and pathos.

Edmund Clarence Stedman (1833—), banker, poet, and critic, ranks high as a lyrist. He wrote *The Diamond Wedding*, a social satire, *Alice of Monmouth*, a story of the great war in verse, *The Blameless Prince*, *Hawthorne*, a beautiful tribute to the memory of the famous novelist (v. § 137), *The Doorstep*, *At Twilight*, *Pan in Wallstreet*, *Toujours Amour*, *Laura, my Darling*, and many other beautiful idyls and lyrics. Stedman's talent for literary criticism is of the highest order. His *Victorian Poets* is "one of the most thorough, workmanlike, and artistic pieces of real literary criticism", and his *Poets of America* is likewise a masterpiece.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836—), editor of *The Atlantic*, is eminent as a poet and writer of fiction. His writings, whether in prose or in verse, are works of art of exquisite

mould and delicate finish. In his stories, a quiet humour is added to an otherwise charming style. *Baby Bell*, *The Face Against the Pane*, *Cloth of Gold*, and *Friar Jerome's Beautiful Book* are good specimens of his poetry; *Marjorie Daw*, *Prudence Palfrey*, *The Stillwater Tragedy*, and *The Story of a Bad Boy* the finest of his prose works.

Joaquin Miller, (1841—) a lyrical-epic poet, paints in vividly glowing colours the luxuriant beauties of southern countries in his *Songs of the Sierras* and *Songs of the Sun-Lands*, among which latter *The Isles of the Amazons* is the richest in poetic vigour and fine colouring. His most popular poems are *Kit Karson's Ride*, and *With Walker in Nicaragua*, which treats the adventures of "the grey-eyed Man of Destiny", an intrepid buccaneer in the service of the Union slave-traders, who is taken prisoner and executed on a predatory excursion to Honduras in September 1860. His minor poems, collected under the common title of *Fallen Leaves*, are of an unequal value, whilst in his *Olive Leaves* he has proved himself a successful writer of religious songs.

§ 133.

FEMALE POETS.

Lydia Huntley Sigourney (1791—1865), was equally skilful in prose and poetry. Her finest poems are *The Death of an Infant*, *Winter*, *Napoleon's Epitaph*, and *Niagara*.

Frances Sargent Osgood (1813—1850), unequalled in either hemisphere in her poems for children, which she published under the title of *Snowdrops*. Other collections of her poems are *A Wreath of Wild Flowers from New-England*, and *Flowers of Poetry*.

Stuart Sterne, a German lady of the name of Gertrude Bloede, is sometimes called "the female Chamisso" for her great skill in the English language. Her poems are original and impressive.

Alice Carey* (1820—1871). "No American woman has evinced in prose or poetry anything like the genius of Alice Carey". Of her prose works *Clovernook*, *Pictures of Country Life*, *Married, not Mated*, and *Hollywood* are most popular. Her poems, as *The Poet to the Painter*, *Order for a Picture*, *The Bridal Veil*, *Pictures of Memory* and *Thanksgiving* show delicacy of sentiment, power of imagination, and gracefulness of composition.

PROSE-LITERATURE.

§ 134.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN*, 1706—1790.

This great statesman and philosopher was one of the most fertile writers and has greatly contributed to his native literature. He was born of a respectable family of Boston. At the early age of nine, he was taken from school to help his father in his business, that of a soap-boiler. Three years after, the young boy became an apprentice in the printing office of his brother James, where he already began to write anonymous articles in the *New England Courant* in imitation of Addison. Getting estranged from his brother through unfair treatment, the young pennyless man of seventeen betook himself to Philadelphia whose most distinguished citizen he later should become. He gained some local renown as a printer and editor, but, induced by some untrustworthy promises, he went to London where, poverty-stricken, he again supported himself by typesetting. Returned to Philadelphia he, after some more trying experiences, set up a printing office of his own (1729), bought *The Pennsylvania Gazette* and applied his pen to subjects of local and general colonial interest whereby he soon became a man of note and influence. During all that time, he was remedying, by constant study of several languages, the defects of his early education.

Through his indefatigable activity as a writer, scientific investigator and patriot, he constantly rose in rank and fortune. He was appointed member of the Assembly of Legislature and Deputy Postmaster of Philadelphia, was several times sent, as a special commissioner, to London, on one of which occasions he received the honorable title of a Dr. from the University of St. Andrews, and reached the height of his popularity when in 1765, mainly through his influence, the Repeal of the Stamp-Act was proclaimed. He, then, took an active part in the Revolution, was appointed American Minister to France, where he was received with unbounded enthusiasm, and where in 1785 he secured the independence of the United States in the treaty of Paris. On his return he was made "President of Pennsylvania" and died in 1790.

Franklin was a most versatile writer, covering all sorts of

subjects dictated by his sincerest love of humanity. His chief literary contributions to American literature are his *Autobiography*, the most extensive of his works whose first authoritative text appeared only in 1868; his *Papers on Electricity*, and *Poor Richard's Almanac*, founded in 1732 and continued for about 25 years, which alone would have sufficed to perpetuate his fame, to which were added *Wise Saws and Modern Instances* as an indispensable part, and by which he provided his nation for a quarter of a century with sayings, proverbs, and bits of homely advice, principles of common sense, economy, prudence, and practical wisdom, which have been for ever incorporated into the English language. His aims as a philosopher were not very ideal, but rather serviceable: he strove to render his countrymen frugal, industrious, prudent, and worldly-wise. His merits as a scientist and patriot will secure his fame for ever in the annals of American and universal history.

§ 135.

WASHINGTON IRVING*, 1783—1859.

This most widely-known of all American prose-writers was the youngest of the eleven children of an emigrant merchant of New York. After an ordinary school-education, he commenced, at the age of sixteen, to study the law and to make his first literary attempts by humorous articles, appearing in his brother Peter's journal. In consequence of ill-health, in his twenty-first year, he sailed for Bordeaux and thence roamed over the most beautiful parts of southern Europe, visited Switzerland and sojourned in Paris, passed through Holland to England, returned home in 1826, and again resumed his former studies. He was admitted to the bar, but never practiced, finding literary occupation more congenial to his tastes. Shortly after, he joined in the publication of a paper called *Salmagundi*, a miscellany full of humour, which decided the fortune of the author. In the following year, he published *The History of New York, by Diedrich Knickerbocker*, a most original and humorous work, by which he established his fame as an American writer. In the autumn of 1814, he joined the military staff of the Governor of New York as aid-de-camp with the title of colonel, but in the following year, he embarked for England to regulate commercial transactions of his brothers.

Financial troubles and the remarkable success of his literary enterprises encouraged him to pursue this career. During his sojourn in England, where he visited W. Scott at Abbotsford, he wrote the papers called *The Sketch-Book** (1818), which first appeared in separate numbers under the pseudonym of "Geoffrey Crayon" and attracted universal admiration on both sides of the main. After a few years' residence in England, Irving sojourned in Paris and then in Dresden, ever actively occupied with his pen, which at this period furnished *Bracebridge Hall** and *Tales of a Traveller*, both much in the same manner as the Sketch-Book and pervaded by the finest humour. Thence he betook himself to Spain, and lived in Madrid, Seville, and Granada where he resided a few months in the old Moorish palace of the Alhambra which suggested his charming book of the *Alhambra**. After a stay of four years, he returned to England, being appointed Secretary to the American Embassy in London, which office he held till 1831.

While in England, Irving received one of the twenty-guinea gold medals provided by George IV. for eminence in historical composition, and the degree of LL.D. (Doctor of Laws) from the University of Oxford. His return to New York, after an absence of seventeen years, was greeted by a festival at which were gathered all the illustrious men of his native metropolis. The following summer he joined a party of commissioners sent for the removal of the Indian tribes west of the Mississippi. The fruit of this excursion was his graphic *Tour of the Prairies*. An engagement for literary contributions to the *Knickerbocker* lasted only two years. In 1842 Irving was appointed ambassador to Spain, which high post he filled to the honour of his country during four years, ever remaining faithful to the principle of his life: "honesty is the best policy". On the return to his country in 1846, he began the publication of a revised edition of his works, to which he added *The Lives of Goldsmith* and of *Washington**, which latter he considered a patriotic duty. After his return to his native country in 1832, Irving lived at his country seat Sunnyside near Tarrytown, later called Irvington in honour of his name, where he spent his last years in a serene and quiet life, surrounded by the families of his two brothers; he himself had remained unmarried. Healthy in body and soul, free of care, loved and honoured by all and with his fame increasing till his dying day, he closed his long, eventful, and happy life with the conclusion

of the last volume of his *Life of Washington* on the 28th of November 1859.

Among the rest of Irving's writings the most important are *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus**, *Chronicles of the Conquest of Grenada*, *Legends of the Conquest of Spain*, and the charming description of "Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey".

"With W. Irving the man and the author were one. His tastes, and talents, and habits were all those of the literary man." The same sparkling and refreshing humour, the same sweetness, without any trace of bitterness, the same grace and geniality, endeared both the man and the writer to his friends and readers. The principal charms of his writings, both historical and descriptive, consist in their simple naturalness and faithfulness to reality and, in a still higher degree, in the most elaborate and refined style, and in the plain, clear and flowing language, never tainted by vulgarity or disgraced by affectation.

NOVELISTS.¹

§ 136.

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER*, 1789—1851.

James F. Cooper, "the American Walter Scott", was born at Burlington on the Delaware, New Jersey. His youth, however, was spent on the borders of Lake Otsego in the state of New York, where his father had purchased large tracts of land, an almost unbroken wilderness, and founded the place of Cooperstown. When thirteen years of age, young Cooper entered Yale College, which he left after three years, when he enlisted in the navy of the United States, collecting that inexhaustible stock of knowledge and imagery which he later so skilfully displayed in his sea-novels. Resigning his post of midshipman in 1810, he married, and after a brief residence in Westchester-County, settled at Cooperstown, where he passed the greater part of his life, interrupted only by frequent visits to New York and by occasional tours to Europe, where he visited England, France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. In Lyons he held the post of United States consul from 1826 to 1829,

¹ Those novels marked with an * are contained in the Tauchnitz Collection.

and then spent some time in Dresden. He returned in 1833 and died in 1851.

"Cooper was one of those frank and decided characters who make strong enemies and warm friends. There was no neutral ground in his nature. His beautiful residence was ever the home of a large and liberal hospitality."

This celebrated novelist wrote upwards of thirty novels of unequal value. His first novel, *Precaution*, descriptive of English life, found but little favour. But *The Spy** in 1821 at once established his fame both in America and abroad. It exhibits an attractive and sometimes touching picture of the times of the war of independence, and although not without defects, proved to be the work of an original genius. *The Pioneers* (1823), the first of the so-called *Leather Stocking Tales*, increased his reputation, which was still heightened by each succeeding novel, as *The Deerslayer*, *The Pathfinder*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, and *The Prairie*.

As signal a triumph as that which he had won on the land, Cooper achieved on the sea by his *Sea-Tales*, *The Pilot* (1823), *The Water-Witch*, *The Red Rover*, *The Two Admirals** etc., by which he became the true founder of the sea-novel, in which post he will ever remain unsurpassed.

Besides his novels, Cooper composed a *History of the United States Navy*, *Gleanings in Europe*, which contains a detailed description of his travelling experiences and adventures, and *Sketches of Switzerland*.

Cooper was a true representative of his nation, displaying the wild and wonderful charms of the primeval forest, the prairie, the Indian life, and of the adventurous spirit of the American character in animated and attractive pictures to the eyes of marvelling Europe. The powerful attraction which they exercise must be explained by the great faithfulness and reality observed in the description of events and sceneries, and by the efficacy and vividness with which events and especially perilous adventures are narrated.

Among the author's principal defects are the inconsistency with which he often draws his characters, in particular those of women, looseness and incoherency of plot, and a frequent and tiresome training of the dialogue.

§ 137.

Charles Brockden Brown (1771—1810), the first of American novelists, wrote novels of a phantastic, ghostly character, full of apparitions and unearthly influences, as *Wieland, or the Transformation of the Soul; Ormond, or the Secret Witness, Edgar Huntley* etc.

James Kirke Paulding (1778—1860), the friend and early fellow-labourer of W. Irving and a great patriot and satirist, acquired his fame as a novel-writer by *Westward-Ho!*, a characteristic description of the life of the first settlers in Kentucky, and *The Dutchman's Fireside*, a vivid picture of the rural and urban life at New York in the times of the Canadian wars.

Katharine Sedgwick (1789 —1848), "the female Cooper" and the chief founder of the so-called "domestic reading", intended for the spread of useful knowledge among families. She was the authoress of a great number of novels, among which *Redwood* and *Married or Single?* are the most known.

Robert Montgomery Bird (1803—1854), the exact painter of American life and character in Mexico; *Calavar, or the Knight of the Conquest*, and *The Nick of the Woods* are perhaps the most popular of his works.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1807—1864), the severe Puritan writer and fine delineator of the human heart, is "the greatest imaginative writer since Shakespeare"¹ with a great predilection for the wonderful, mysterious, and horrible. *The Scarlet Letter** is his masterpiece and the greatest of American novels. Among his other novels, the best are *Blithedale Romance*, *The Marble Faun, or Transformation**, a romance of Italy and much read in England, and *The House of the Seven Gables*. Hawthorne more than any other novel-writer spread a poetic charm over New-England.

William Dean Howells (1837—), editor, poet, novelist, and literary critic, probably ranks first among living novelists. *Their Wedding Journey**, *The Lady of Aroostook*, *The Undiscovered Country**, *A Modern Instance*, and *The Rise of Silas Lapham** are among the best of his numerous novels. *Venitian Life* and *Italian Journeyings* are charming and faithful descriptions of life and scenery in Italy.

¹ James Russel Lowell.

Harriet Beecher-Stowe (1812—) created an immense sensation throughout the civilized world by *Uncle Tom's Cabin** (1852), and gained a doubtful reputation by her revelations with respect to Byron's private life.

Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney writes pleasant popular stories of girl-life. *A Summer in Leslie Goldthwaite's Life* is probably her best.

Mrs. F. H. Burnett is the author of *That Lass o'Lowrie's*, a vivid picture of mining life in Lancashire, England, in which the dialect of that region is accurately reproduced, and of a charming story for children entitled *Little Lord Fauntleroy**.

Charles Egbert Craddock (Miss Mary N. Murfree) is a young novelist of much promise and rapidly increasing reputation. She excels in describing the wild scenery in the Tennessee mountains and in reproducing the dialect of the mountaineers. Her best novel is *In the Clouds*; *Down the Ravine* is a story for young people. Other female-novelists are

Maria S. Cummins, who wrote *The Lamplighter**, and *Haunted Hearts**;

Elisabeth Wetherell (Miss Warner), who presented the religious public with *The Wide, Wide World*.*

§ 138.

Humorous Novel-writing has found able representatives.

Charles Godfrey Leland (1824), a man of great learning, who studied in Germany and translated several German authors into English, chiefly obtains humorous effects by the oddity of his language, as in *Breitmann's Ballads*, which in a sort of mongrel German-English ridicule the uncultivated German element in America, and in *Pidgin-English Sing-Song*, written in the Chinese-English dialect and deriding the Chinese of America. To be mentioned, besides, are the *Sketchbook of Meister Karl* and *Gipsy Songs*.

Charles Farrar Browne (1834—1867), a favourite humorous writer of New-England, known under the "nom de plume" of Artemus Ward, whose humour consists in a most natural and unaffected representation of absurdities and extravagances, delivered most of his humorous conceptions by lectures both in America and England, where he died. A collection of his writings appeared in 1864 under the title of *Artemus Ward*.

His Book; some of the most witty are *The Babes in the Wood* and *Sixty Minutes in Africa*.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835), otherwise **Mark Twain**, is a prolific writer, whose humour, mixed with a fair dose of satire, chiefly consists in hyperbolical representation. *Innocents Abroad*, *A Tramp Abroad*, and *Prince and Pauper*, a pathetic not humorous story, are the most popular of his writings.

Charles Dudley Warner (1829—) may also be classed among the humorous prose writers, though his humour is of a quieter, less obtrusive character than that of **Artemus Ward** or **Mark Twain**. *My Summer in a Garden* is a charming book. *Saunderings* and *In the Levant* are books of travel.

Francis Bret Harte (1839—), "the poet of the Gold-country", wrote numerous works in prose and poetry. All his creations are fresh and original, but "quite imbued with Americanism". They are faithful to life, often painted in glowing colours, yet without being offensive to aesthetic feeling. He is ever guided by a deep moral sense and an ideal striving to search for the divine spark even in the most abject of human beings. Among his best writings in verse are *The Society upon the Stanislaus*, *The Stage-Driver's Story*, in hexameters, *The Lost Galleon*. Of his prose tales may be mentioned *Tales of the Argonauts*, *Overland*, *The Luck of Roaring Camp*, *Idyls of the Foothills**, *Drift from Two Shores**, *In the Carquinez Woods*, *Gabriel Conroy** *Thankful Blossom* and other Tales.* Bret Harte has also distinguished himself as a patriotic singer, so in *Our Privilege* and *The Reveille*, as a dialect poet in *The Heathen Chinee* and *In the Tunnel*, and as a satirist in his *Condensed Novels*, keen and striking burlesques of some well known French and English novelists.

§ 139.

HISTORIANS.

Historical writing presents some very important names, the first of which is that of

George Ticknor (1791—1871), predecessor of the poet Longfellow in the chair of modern literature at Harvard College. He wrote *A History of Spanish Literature* (1849) excelling in learning and sound criticism, which established his world-wide fame.

William Henry Prescott (1796—1859), famous for his industrious researches and animated, graceful representations of Spanish history. He wrote *History of Ferdinand and Isabella* (1837), *History of Philip the Second* (1855—58), *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (1843), and *History of the Conquest of Peru* (1847).

John Gorham Palfrey (1796—1881), author of a *History of New England* in four volumes. It is full and accurate, and written in a simple, terse style.

George Bancroft (1800—) composed *A History of the United States* (1834—53) in ten volumes, which forms a complete history of the United States to the close of the revolutionary war, written with great erudition and brilliancy of style.

John L. Motley (1814—1877) took his rank as an eminent historian by his great historical work, *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* (1856). His second work is the *History of the United Netherlands* (1860—65), both showing immense research and a masterly style.

Francis Parkman (1823) is justly entitled to a place among the preceding historians. His representations are real and vivid, ever harmonizing with the themes they treat. He is the author of *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, and a large work, *France and England in North America*, six parts of which have already appeared.

John Will. Draper wrote *A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe* (1862) in two volumes, and *A History of the American Civil War* (1867—70).

ESSAYISTS.

§ 140.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803—1882), the most original thinker and highest reaching ethical teacher America has produced, the great interpreter of German philosophy, and the enlightened champion of freedom and progress of humanity, which he, like Carlyle, asserts to culminate in its "great men", contributed to these noble aims by his *English Traits*, his *Representative Men*, *Society and Solitude*, and other treatises and lectures.

As a poet he deserves his place among the first lyric singers of his country. His turns are wild and unexpected, he is never common-place, although, as a rule, his poetry is more intellectual than emotional. "His verse has the cold beauty of the moon rather than the vital warmth of the sun." *Concord Fight, Boston Hymn, Threnody, Woodnotes, The Sphynx, May-Day, Days, The Snowstorm*, and "*Thine Eyes still shined*" must be mentioned as most truly characteristic of Emerson's poetic genius.

James Russell Lowell (1819—), "essayist, poet, satirist, critic, lecturer, professor¹, diplomatist, man of the world, of letters, and of affairs, is the representative of American literature." He is not prolific nor popular, but profound. His three volumes of essays, *My Study Windows*, and *Among my Books*, two series, show that he has no superior as a literary critic. No one is better judge of what is original; his standard is the manner of saying. His most original and most popular work is *The Biglow Papers**, written in the Yankee dialect.

As a poet he is distinguished for fine portrayal of nature, clever satire, energy, fancy, delicacy, and pathos. *The Courtin'* is a bucolic idyl without a counterpart; *A Fable for Critics* is a humorous poem in which he characterizes contemporary poets and himself as well in an accurate and clever way. Of his other poems the best are *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, *A Glance behind the Curtain*, *Under the Willows*, *Longing*, *The Changeling*, *The First Snow-Fall*, and *Commemoration Ode*.

William Ellery Channing (1780—1842), the great apostle of freedom and temperance, and the head of the "Unitarians", wrote several works and tracts on theological, social, and literary questions, as *On Slavery*, *Self-Culture*, and *Essay on National Literature*.

Alexander H. Everett (1791—1847) published *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*.

Henry Th. Tuckerman (1813—1871), an eminent literary scholar, wrote *Thoughts on the Poets*, *Characteristics of Literature*, *Biographical Essays*, and an excellent *Sketch of American Literature*.

Henry David Thoreau (1817—1862), a careful observer

¹ Successor of Longfellow at Harvard College.

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of the phenomena of nature, wrote a number of works, the most characteristic of which are *Walden, or Life in the Woods*, and *Cape-Cod*.

Edwin Percy Whipple (1819—1886) was one of the most popular of American essayists and one of the most subtle, discriminating, and profound of critics. He wrote almost exclusively on literary topics. *The Literature of the Age of Elizabeth**, his best work, is a rich storehouse of information.

Supplementary Notes:

Page 201: Henry Taylor died 1886.
" " Henry James Byron 1884.
" 206: Charles Reade 1884.

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HEIDELBERG.

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ABBREVIATIONS.

Agl. — Anglia, Zeitschr. f. engl. Philologie, hrsg. v. R. Wülker. Mit einem krit. Anzeiger von Mor. Trautmann. Halle 1878 ff.

Alts. u. ags. Sprachpr. — Altsächsische u. angelsächs. Sprachproben, hrsg. von H. Leo, Halle 1838.

Anal. Agsax. — Analecta Anglosaxonica. A Selection in Prose and Verse from Anglo-Saxon Authors of various ages; with a Glossary. By Benj. Thorpe. London 1884.

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Beitr. v. P. & Br. — Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Litteratur, hrsg. von Herm. Paul und Wilh. Braune, Halle 1874 ff.

Bibl. d. Ags. P. — Bibliothek der angelsächs. Poesie von Chr. Grein, neu bearbeitet von R. Wülker, 1883 ff.

Bibl. d. Ags. Pr. — Bibliothek der angelsächs. Prosa von Chr. Grein, 1872. Fortgesetzt von R. Wülker.

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Clar. Pr. — Clarendon Press Series; Oxford.

Cod. Ex. — Codex Exoniensis. A Collection of Agl. Sax. Poetry. With an Engl. Translation, Notes and Indexes by Benj. Thorpe. London 1842.

Cod. Verc. — Codex Vercellensis, with an Engl. Translation by J. M. Kemble, Part I & II. London 1843 and 1856.

Dichtg. d. A.S. — Dichtungen der Angelsachsen stabreimend übersetzt von C. W. M. Grein, I & II. Göttingen 1857—59 & 1863.

E. E. T. Soc. — Early Engl. Text Society.

Eb. Jhrb. — Eberts Jahrbuch für roman. u. engl. Litteratur. Berl. 1859 ff.

Engl. St. — Englische Studien, hrgb. von E. Kölbing, Heilbronn 1877.

Engl. M. of L. — English Men of Letters; Macmillan.

Gold. Tr. Ser. — Golden Treasury Series; Macmillan.

Hpt. Zschr. — Haupt's Zeitschr. für deutsches Alterthum. Leipz. 1841 ff.

Kl. Ags. Dchtg. — Kleinere angelsächs. Dichtungen von R. Wülker.

Pfeiff. Germ. — Pfeifers Germania. Stuttgart 1856 ff.

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Sc. & Boc. — Engla and Seaxna Scopas and Boceras. Anglo-Saxonum Poetae atque Scriptores Prosaici etc., ed.: Ludovicus Ettmüller. Quedlinburg u. Leipz. 1850.

Sh. Jhrb. — Jahrbücher der deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, hrsg. von K. Elze, später von F. A. Leo, Weimar 1864 ff.

Z. Ztschr. f. d. Phil. — Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie, hrgb. von E. Höpfner u. J. Zacher. Halle 1868 ff.

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Poems and Poetry of Europe ed. by H. W. L., the Author; new edit. Bost & N. York (5 doll.).

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Works, incl. Dramatic Works and Translation of Faust ed. by Marie Hansen-Taylor and Scudder, 6 vls., Bost. & Lond. (12 doll.). — Selected Poems. 'Melodies of Verse'. Houghton & Mifflin, Bost. & N. York (1 doll.). — Ballads illustr., ibid., 'Riverside Lit. Ser.' (2 doll. 50 c.). — Poems of Home and Travel, ibid. (1 doll. 25 c.).

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Fr. Bret Harte. Complete Edition 1872, coll. & revised by the Author, 5 vls., 1881. — 'Riverside Edition'. With Portr. & Introduction, 5 vls., Bost. & New York (2 doll.). — 'Tauchnitz Collection'. — Select Works in prose and poetry with introd. Essay by J. W. Bellew, Portr. & Illustr. (7 s. 6 d.).

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b. Works. Compl. Edition in 1779. — A Collection in 2 vls., Lond. 1798, in 3 vls. 1806. Most compl. Edition by Will. Temple, F. (his grandson), Lond. 1818—19. — Works with Life written by Himself, Lond. 1838. — Newest Edition by Sparks, with Life, Boston 1850 (10 vls.). — Literary Life and Miscellanies, 3 vls., Lond. 1834 (£ 1, 11 s. 6 d.).

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b. Works. Complete Works 15 vls. (3 s. 6 d. each). — 'Tauchnitz Collection' 11 vls. (Sketch Book, Oliver Goldsmith, Washington etc.). — 'Geoffrey Crayon Edition', a new compl. Library Edition, illustr., 27 vls. (12 s. 6 d. each).

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ADDENDA.

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d. Histories of the Language & Lit.: Chambers, Cyclopaedia of the Engl. Lit. Lond. 2 vls. (£ 1); (Short biogr. sketches with numerous specimens). — Morley, H., A First Sketch of Engl. Lit., 3rd. ed. Lond. s. a. Idem: 'Engl. Writers', History of the Engl. Lit. (in course of prep.). N. York & Boston. — J. Bassom, Philosophy of Engl. Lit., Lond. & N. York. — A. H. Welsh, Development of the Engl. Language & Lit., Chicago.

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4. Complete Works: Rich. G. White, 'Riverside Edit.', 3 vls., Bost. & N. York (7 doll. 50 cts.). — H. H. Turner, *The New Variorum Edition of Sh.* (in course of prep.; of great service for Students); Bost. & N. York (4 doll.).

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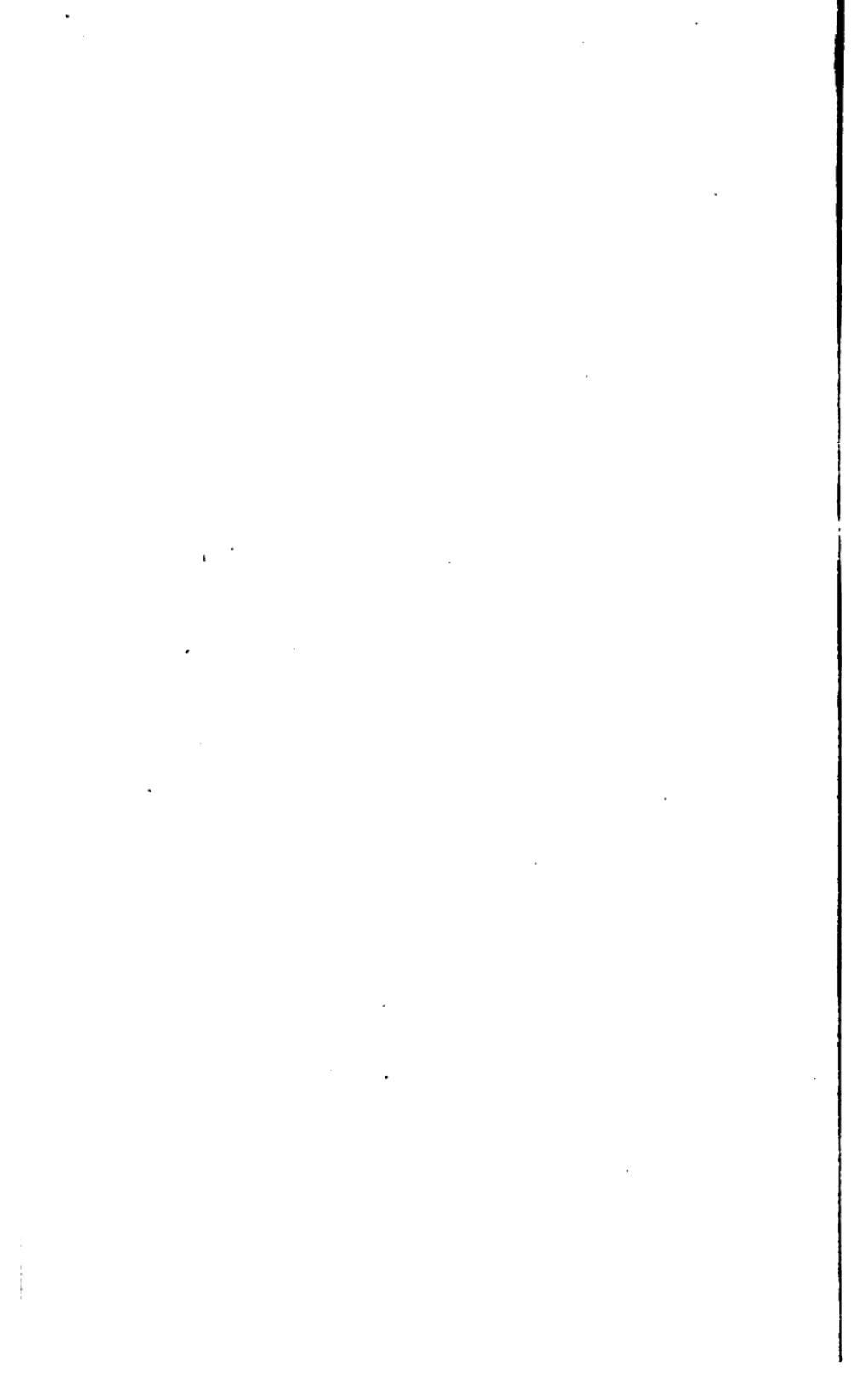
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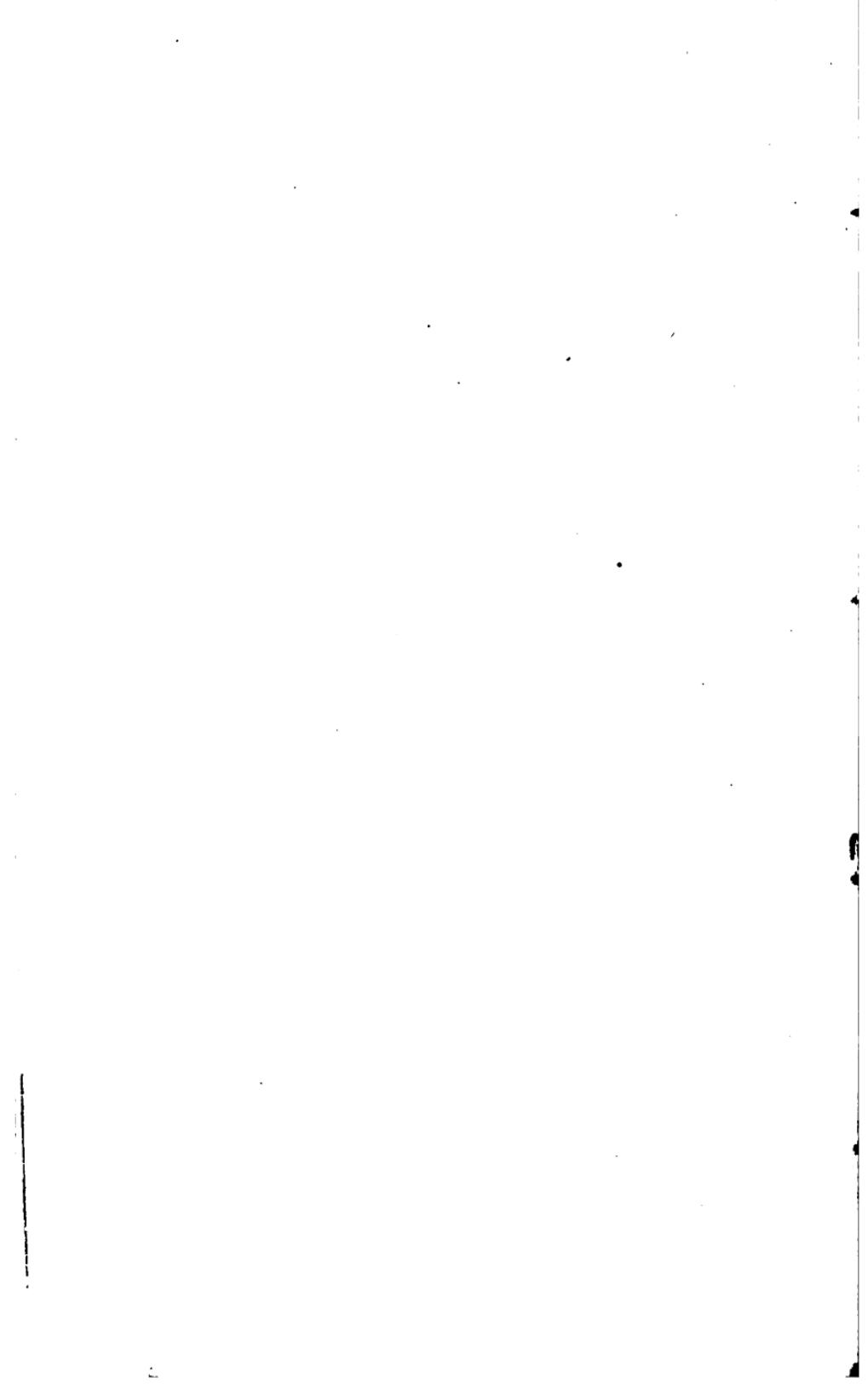
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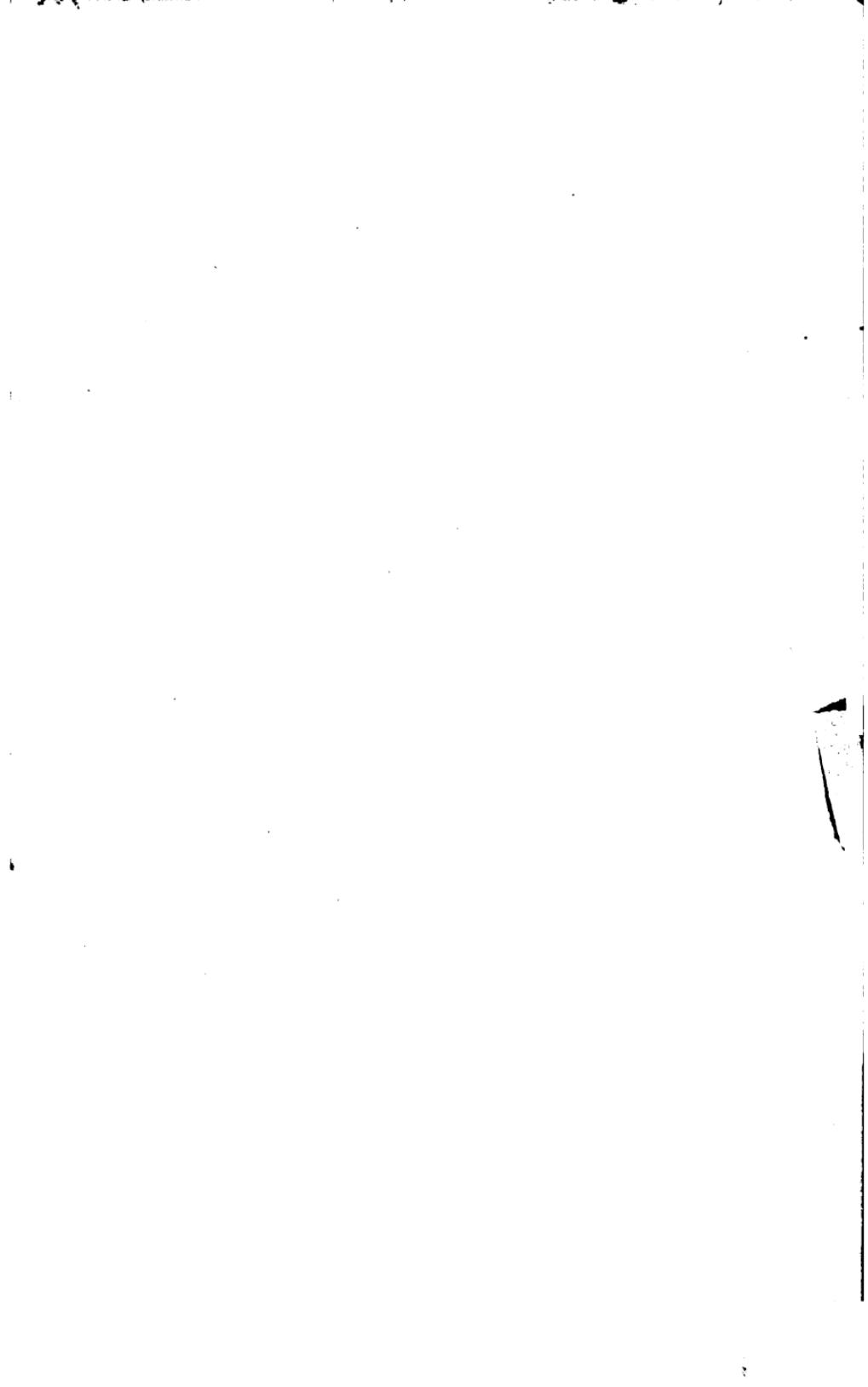
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